

# ***JA WORLDWIDE***



## **JA FINANCE PARK**

### Final Report

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Submitted by:  
Evaluation and Training Institute  
12300 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 420  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

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## I. Introduction

Junior Achievement (JA) Worldwide is a non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring and preparing young people for success in a global economy. Through K-12 programming, students explore career interests, develop work-readiness skills, and become more financially literate. Through an investigation of their own skills, interests, and values, students gain an understanding of the relationship between education and successful participation in the local economy. JA Worldwide's Capstone Programs offer students the chance to put these lessons into action in a real world situation.

Designed for the middle grades, *JA Finance Park* is a six-week economics education program providing students with the opportunity to develop personal money management skills, acquire personal finance knowledge, and prepare for financial decisions and challenges in their adult lives. Students explore personal finance and career options through classroom instruction culminating in a day-long hands-on experience where students assume family and income scenarios. Through the day they make investment decisions; use bank services; contribute to charities, and purchase housing, transportation, furnishings, food, health care, and other expenses while maintaining a balanced budget. *JA Finance Park* helps students build a foundation for making intelligent, lifelong, personal financial decisions through hands-on, realistic site-based experiences.

In 2007, JA contracted with the Evaluation and Training Institute (ETI) to conduct a summative evaluation of *JA Finance Park*. The evaluation was designed to assess the impact of the program on student learning as well as address students, teachers, volunteers, and JA Member staff attitudes toward the program curriculum, materials, and simulation. This report presents the findings from ETI's evaluation of *JA Finance Park*.

## II. Methodology

In order to measure the extent to which *JA Finance Park* improved students' knowledge of program content, ETI used a pre-post program research design. ETI researchers were also interested in gauging students' attitudes toward the classroom lessons, simulation, and overall experience, and toward this end used a post- program retrospective strategy. Additional instruments were designed to assess program stakeholders' attitudes regarding program content, materials, and the simulation. ETI used surveys in both online and paper formats as the primary method of data collection for this evaluation. Specifically, ETI developed surveys for participating students, teachers, volunteers, and JA Member staff.

## Student Surveys

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ETI designed a paper pre-/post-test outcome survey and a post-program survey to be administered to 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 15 true-false, matching, and multiple choice items that were generated from content in the *JA Finance Park* curriculum. This section of the pre-/post-test outcome survey was designed to assess changes in students' content knowledge that occurred over the course of the program. The survey also included a brief demographic section.

Post-program Survey. The post-program questionnaire focused on students' overall impressions of the in-class and simulation portions of the program. Specifically, the post-program questionnaire addressed:

- in-class unit and simulation likes and dislikes;
- perceptions of in-class unit games and activities;
- perceptions of in-class unit length, content difficulty, and ease of using materials;
- perceptions of the simulation infrastructure and design;
- nature of the simulation check-in, flow, progress, and check-out;
- perceived comfort level with the simulation;
- use of technology during the simulation;
- interactions with JA Volunteers during the simulation;
- perceived current and long-term interest in the topic and,
- fun quotient.

## Volunteer Post-simulation Surveys

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Post-simulation Survey. Volunteers assisting with the *JA Finance Park* simulation were asked to complete a brief paper survey immediately following the simulation. The volunteers were asked about:

- the recruitment process;
- training and preparation provided by JA;
- perceptions of the simulation infrastructure and design;
- execution of the simulation;
- relationship of the simulation to the "real world";
- level of participation during the simulation;
- interactions with the students;
- attitudes toward young people;
- attitudes toward volunteerism;

- willingness to volunteer for JA in the future and,
- overall satisfaction with the simulation.

## Teacher Online Surveys

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Post-program Survey. Unlike other JA programs, in *JA Finance Park* classroom teachers are responsible for presenting the in-class portion. It was essential, therefore, to garner detailed feedback from teachers participating in the program. The online post-program survey focused on teachers' overall impressions of the in-class units and simulation. Specifically, the teacher post-program questionnaire addressed:

- degree of the in-class units' alignment with teachers' course curriculum;
- extent to which the in-class units address state, district, and school standards;
- quality and utility of the in-class unit curriculum content;
- design and utility of the in-class unit materials;
- perceived comfort level presenting the program content;
- simulation logistics, including preparation, transportation, and scheduling;
- perceptions of the simulation infrastructure and design;
- execution of the simulation;
- level of participation during the simulation;
- value the simulation adds to the in-class curriculum;
- relationship of the program to the "real world";
- perceptions of students' participation in and reactions to the in-class units and simulation;
- the ability of the program to meet stated objectives and,
- overall satisfaction with the in-class units and simulation.

## JA Member Staff Online Surveys

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Post-program Survey. Similar to the teacher surveys, the JA Member staff online post-program survey focused on staff members' overall impressions of the program. Specifically, the post-program survey asked respondents about:

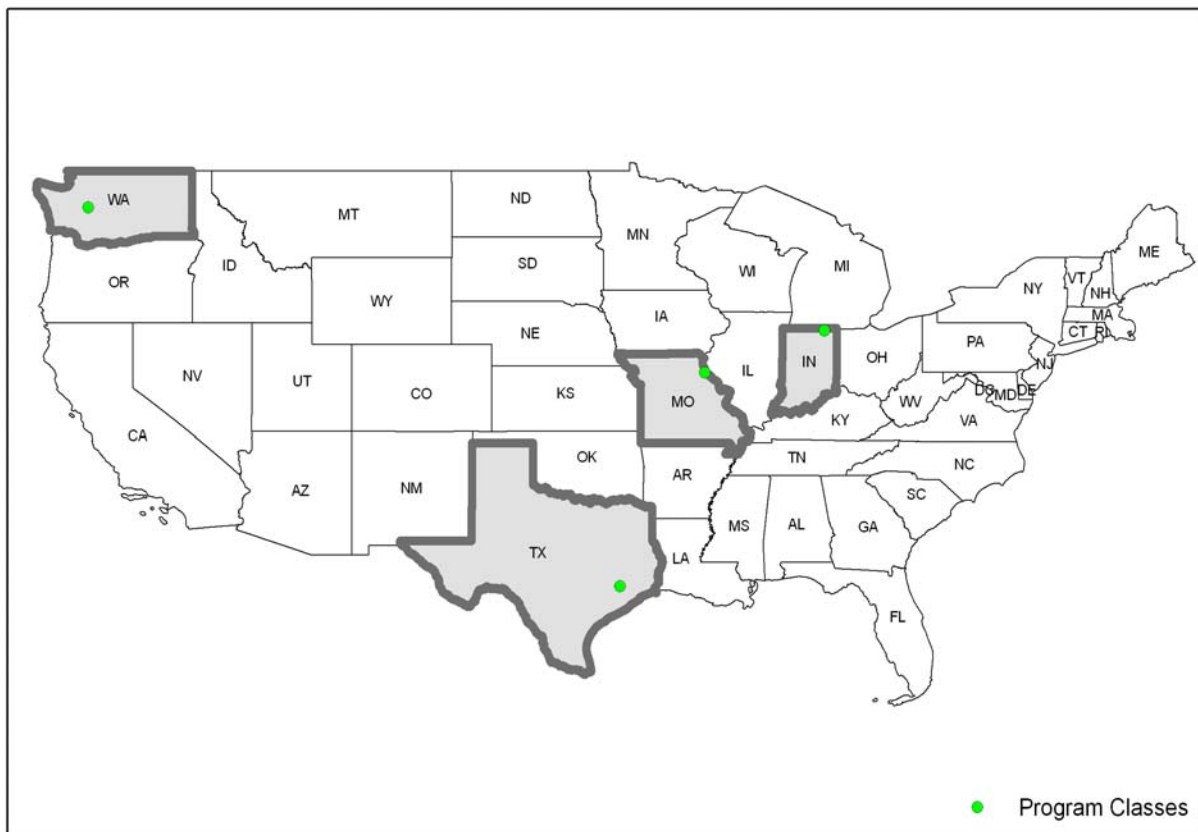
- school and teacher recruitment;
- volunteer recruitment and training;
- logistics planning and coordination, such as scheduling classroom visits to the *JA Finance Park* simulation location;
- perceptions of lesson length, content difficulty, alignment with local content standards;
- perceptions of the quality of the program materials and,
- overall satisfaction with the program.

Copies of the student, teacher, volunteer, and JA Member staff surveys can be found in the **Appendices**.

## Data Collection Process

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ETI worked with 4 domestic JA Members recruited by JA Worldwide to assist in the evaluation by coordinating the administration and collection of the surveys. At the onset of the evaluation, JA Worldwide and ETI conducted a conference call with the evaluation task force members from each participating Member office. During the conference call, JA and ETI staff described the evaluation process in detail and fielded staff members' questions regarding the study's design and implementation. The JA Members participating in the evaluation of *JA Finance Park* had initially recruited 32 classrooms for the study, as presented in Map 1 below and **Table 1** on the following page.



**Table 1**  
**Sample of Participating Classrooms**

<b>JA Member</b>	<b>Number of Program Classrooms</b>
JA of the Mississippi Valley	n= 10
JA of Northern Indiana	9
JA of Southeast Texas	3
JA of Washington	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

Prior to the start of the program, each JA Member received a set of student packets for distribution to each participating class. The packets contained a letter of instruction to the teacher and enough surveys for each student in the class. Teachers were instructed to administer the pre-tests to their students before the program started and the post-surveys after completion of the program. Teachers were then expected to return the surveys to the JA task force member who was instructed to return the completed surveys to ETI using a pre-paid FedEx envelope. Volunteers were asked to complete the post-simulation survey immediately following the simulation, and JA Member staff were instructed to return the completed volunteer surveys with the student post-surveys. Teachers and JA Member staff were asked to complete the post-program surveys online following the last program session.

To facilitate a high response rate, ETI conducted extensive follow up with all the sites via telephone and email. At the time that the data collection deadline was reached, 18 of 22 teachers (82 percent) and 7 of 7 JA Member staff (100 percent) had submitted online post-program surveys. Seventy-seven volunteer post-simulation surveys, out of an unknown number of volunteers, were returned.

A total of 479 student pre-/post-survey matched pairs were returned. However, many JA programs address similar content, so the student surveys included an item used as a screening tool to identify students with previous JA experience. As shown in **Table 2** on the following page, 174 pre-/post- student survey matched pairs were completed by students without any previous JA experience, while 305 matched pairs were submitted by students who had participated in JA previously. In addition, 654 completed post-program surveys were returned.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The post-program surveys were anonymous and did not ask respondents to indicate if they had participated in JA previously.

**Table 2**  
**Student Survey Response Rates**

	No Previous JA Experience Pre-/Post-Matched Pairs	Previous JA Experience Pre-/Post-Matched Pairs	Post-program Survey
JA of the Mississippi Valley	n=52	n=112	n=215
	30%	37%	33%
JA of Northern Indiana	n=50	n=71	n=163
	29%	23%	25%
JA of Southeast Texas	n=27	n=57	n=92
	16%	19%	14%
JA of Washington	n=45	n=65	n=184
	26%	%	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>n=174</b>	<b>n=305</b>	<b>n=654</b>

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## Site Visits

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To complement the surveys and to obtain more in-depth feedback about *JA Finance Park*, ETI conducted site visits to four JA Member Offices in March 2008 (see **Table 3** on page 8). Sites were selected to be geographically representative and took place during teachers' implementation of the in-class units as well as during the *JA Finance Park* simulations.

### In-class Unit Visits

ETI researchers observed participating classrooms in order to document teachers' and students' interactions with the program materials and content. Observers took detailed field notes in order to accurately capture the activities and levels of engagement observed.

### JA Finance Park Simulation Visits

First-hand observations of the simulation offered an additional dimension to the evaluation findings by documenting the facilities, activities, and real-time observations of students, JA staff, and volunteers in action. An observation protocol was structured to provide information about JA staff and volunteers as well as students. Observations of the JA staff and volunteers targeted qualities including rapport building, preparation, and enthusiasm, as well as presentation and activities. The student section targeted student learning and connections between the curriculum and the real world. The student section also asked the observer to identify student behaviors including levels of engagement and any problems experienced during the simulation.

## Focus Groups and Interviews

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ETI worked closely with JA Member staff to schedule focus groups and interviews with participating students, teachers, and JA staff during the site visits. In order to gather qualitative data, participants involved with the program were asked about the following:

- extent to which the program curriculum supports differentiated learning styles (teachers and staff only);<sup>2</sup>
- value the program adds to the in-class curriculum (teachers and staff only);
- quality and utility of the program materials;
- students' reactions to the specific sessions and the program overall;
- students' understanding and application of program content;
- successes and challenges of the program;
- the extent to which the program achieves stated objectives and,
- overall reactions and suggestions for the program.

During the four March site visits, a total of four student, five teacher, and five JA staff interviews/focus groups were conducted. Copies of the Moderators' Guides can be found in the **Appendices**.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, in the pilot evaluation of *JA Finance Park*, we learned through anecdotal report that the hands-on nature of the simulation may be especially effective for students with developmental disabilities.

**Table 3**  
**Breakdown Site Visit Locations and Activities**

City	Site Visit Activities	Dates
JA of Washington Auburn, WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student Focus Group</li><li>• Teacher Focus Group (2)</li><li>• JA Staff Focus Group</li><li>• Classroom Observation</li><li>• Volunteer Training Observation</li><li>• Simulation Observation</li></ul>	March 10-11, 2008
JA of Northern Indiana Lagrange, IN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student Focus Group</li><li>• Teacher Focus Group</li><li>• JA Staff Interview</li><li>• Classroom Observation</li><li>• Simulation Observation</li></ul>	March 19-20, 2008
JA of the Mississippi Valley St. Louis, MO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student Focus Group</li><li>• Teacher Interview</li><li>• JA Staff Interview</li><li>• Classroom Observation</li><li>• Simulation Observation</li></ul>	March 26-27, 2008
JA of Southeast Texas Houston, TX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student Focus Groups (2)</li><li>• Teacher Focus Group</li><li>• JA Staff Interviews (2)</li><li>• Classroom Observation</li><li>• Volunteer Training Observation</li><li>• Simulation Observation</li></ul>	March 27-28, 2008

## III. Findings

### Student Findings

#### Student Demographic Profile

The pre-/post-tests contained a series of items designed to garner demographic information from student program participants. More specifically, students' grade level, age, gender, and ethnicity were collected. The results of that query are presented in **Tables 4-6** below.

#### Grade Level

The majority of the students included in the pre-/post-survey analyses reported that they were in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade (84 and 81 percent).

**Table 4**  
**School Grade Level Distribution**

Grade Level	No Previous JA Experience		Previous JA Experience	
	Sample Size	Percentage	Sample Size	Percentage
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	n=146	84%	n=247	81%
Other Grade	27	16	57	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Age

Students' ages ranged from 13 to 19 years old. As presented in **Table 5**, most students were 13 or 14 years old (77 and 78 percent).

**Table 5**  
**Age Distribution**

Age	No Previous JA Experience		Previous JA Experience	
	Sample Size	Percentage	Sample Size	Percentage
13	n=38	22%	n=45	15%
14	95	55	192	63
15	14	8	11	4
17	13	8	24	8
18	12	7	33	11
19	2	1	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>100</b>

## Gender

As shown in **Table 6**, students without previous JA experience were slightly more heavily represented by males (52 percent), whereas the previous JA experience group was more represented by females (53 percent).

**Table 6**  
Gender Distribution

Gender	No Previous JA Experience		Previous JA Experience	
	Sample Size	Percentage	Sample Size	Percentage
Female	n=84	48%	n=162	53%
Male	90	52	143	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>100</b>

## Ethnicity

**Table 7** presents the ethnic breakdown of the student participants. The majority of respondents from both groups self-identified as Caucasian/White (71 and 79 percent). Ten percent of both groups self-identified as Hispanic/Latino.

**Table 7**  
Ethnic Distribution

Gender	No Previous JA Experience		Previous JA Experience	
	Sample Size	Percentage	Sample Size	Percentage
Caucasian/White	n=124	71%	n=240	79%
African American/Black	4	5	21	7
Hispanic/Latino	18	10	29	10
Asian	7	4	16	5
American Indian/Alaskan Native	4	5	8	3
Pacific Islander	6	3	7	2
Other	10	6	10	3

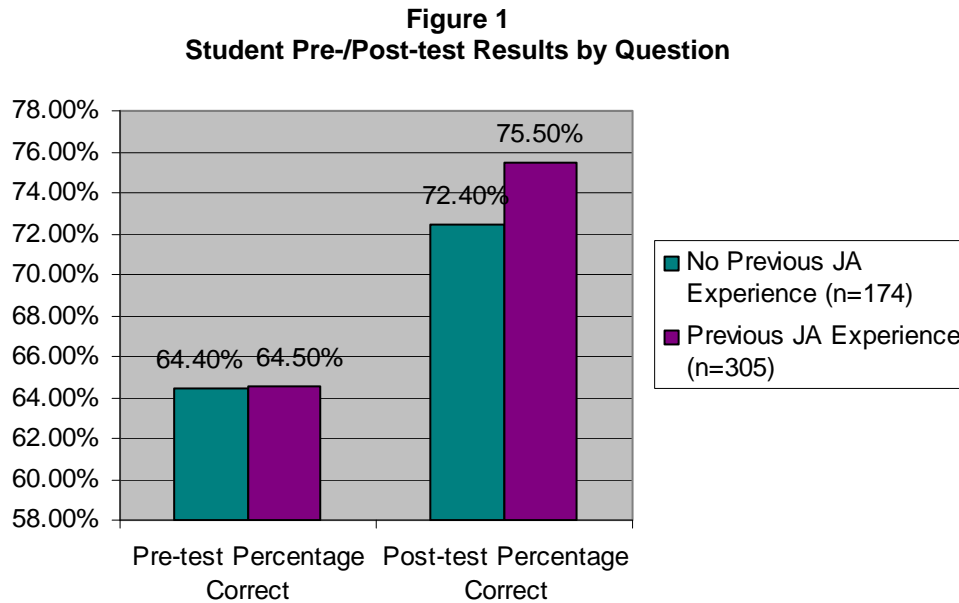
\* Note this is a multi-response question.

## Outcomes Assessment: Student Pre-/Post-Test Results

The primary purpose of the student pre-/post-test was to assess the extent to which students who participated in *JA Finance Park* demonstrated changes in their content knowledge over the course of the program. The instrument contained 18 items in true-false, matching, and multiple choice formats.

From pre- to post-test, students demonstrated a significant increase overall in content knowledge. Students without previous JA experience answered an average of 64 percent of the questions correctly on the pre-test, which increased to 72 percent of questions answered correctly upon completion of *JA Finance Park*. Students with previous JA experience demonstrated an 11 percentage point increase from 64.5

percent to 75.5 percent correct overall (**Figure 1**). Both group’s gains were statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level.



### Analysis of Effect Size

In addition to determining whether the knowledge differences from pre- to post-survey are statistically significant, it is important to know whether the differences identified are large enough to make a “real” difference. While statistical significance informs us of the likelihood that our findings are not due to chance factors, effect size tells us the relative magnitude of the difference obtained. In education, effect sizes of .30 or higher are often considered meaningful. Effect sizes of .50 are robust and effect sizes of .80 or greater are considered evidence of program effectiveness.

Effect size was calculated for the program student’s pre- and post-test scores (e.g. percentage of content items answered correctly overall), producing an estimate of .47.<sup>3</sup> Because the effect size estimate is above .30, it suggests that the relative magnitude of the program’s impact was meaningful and indicative of an influential experimental treatment. In other words, the program can be described as having influenced students’ knowledge in the content areas measured by the pre-/post-test.

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<sup>3</sup> The program student pre-/post- effect size estimate was calculated using the following equation, selected  $ES = t * \text{square root } (2 * (1-r)/n)$ , selected because it takes the correlation between the pre- and post-test scores into account.

### Item Analysis

An item analysis assessed how effectively students learned the program's content by examining responses across the test's individual questions. **Table 8** on the following page presents the percentage of correct responses, computed for each item on the pre- and post-tests, for students with and without previous JA experience. Students in both groups demonstrated a statistically significant increase in the percentage of respondents who answered correctly for eight out of 18 content questions. Students with previous JA experience also demonstrated a statistically significant increase for three additional questions, or 11 total.

Among students without previous JA experience, the percentage of respondents correctly answering five of the questions decreased over the course of the program. The decreases were not statistically significant, but do indicate that volunteers may wish to place greater emphasis on the following concepts:

- Credit card interest;
- Abilities;
- Interests;
- Work preferences and,
- Values.

Students with previous JA experience demonstrated a decrease for just one item, which addressed credit, the financial trust extended to a person by a lender. The decrease, however, was by less than one percentage point.

**Table 8**  
**Student Pre-/Post-test Results by Question**

Survey Question	No Previous JA Experience (n=174)			Previous JA Experience (n=305)		
	Pre-test Percent Correct	Post-test Percent Correct	Significance Value (2-tailed)	Pre-test Percent Correct	Post-test Percent Correct	Significance Value (2-tailed)
Unless a credit card is paid completely each month, the borrower will be charged interest. (T/F)	83.3%	82.2%	.753	83.6%	86.2%	.310
Most people 65 and older can receive health coverage through a program called Medicare. (T/F)	88.5	95.4	.007**	90.8	95.7	.009**
Abilities (definition matching)	90.8	90.2	.836	92.1	92.8	.724
Interests (definition matching)	85.1	81.6	.367	81.6	86.2	.066
Work preferences (definition matching)	83.3	80.5	.447	80.7	83.9	.205
Values (definition matching)	82.8	81.0	.632	80.3	86.6	.016*
When you use a credit card, you... (multiple choice)	87.9	90.2	.434	91.5	92.1	.746
Financial trust extended to a person by a lender is called... (multiple choice)	50.0	56.3	.138	55.7	55.1	.828
The three variables that affect saving money are (multiple choice)	33.3	57.5	.000**	34.1	70.5	.000**
A disadvantage of credit is... (matching)	70.1	75.3	.150	70.5	81.6	.000**
What is Social Security? (multiple choice)	55.7	72.4	.000**	54.8	72.1	.000**
The total amount of monthly income remaining, after all deductions have been taken out, is known as... (multiple choice)	36.8	63.8	.000**	36.7	69.5	.000**
A record of spending or of probable expenditures and income for a given period of time is called... (multiple choice)	53.4	64.4	.003**	57.4	70.2	.000**
Which stock had the highest closing price? (multiple choice)	86.2	90.8	.131	88.9	90.5	.447
Which stock had the largest increase in value from the previous day? (multiple choice)	42.0	43.7	.692	41.3	49.8	.005**
What is Gina's gross annual income? multiple choice)	72.4	89.7	.000**	70.2	84.9	.000**
What is Gina's net monthly income? multiple choice)	38.5	55.7	.001**	31.1	54.4	.000**
After Gina has paid her fixed expenses, how much money does she have left over for monthly variable and other expenses? (multiple choice)	18.4	31.6	.001**	19.0	35.7	.000**
<b>Percentage Correct and Incorrect Overall:</b>	<b>64.4%</b>	<b>72.4%</b>	<b>.000**</b>	<b>64.5%</b>	<b>75.5%</b>	<b>.000**</b>

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

## Content Knowledge Results by Location

Because analyzing data using mean scores across all sites can sometimes mask local differences (for example, one JA Member that demonstrated drastic score improvements could cause the analysis to suggest that all sites demonstrated an improvement), the data were also analyzed for each individual JA Member location to explore which sites significantly increased student test scores.

As presented in **Table 9**, every site participating in the study demonstrated a statistically significant student content knowledge increase from pre- to post-survey at the  $p < .05$  level. In addition, one site, JA of Southeast Texas, demonstrated a significant change at the  $p < .01$  level.

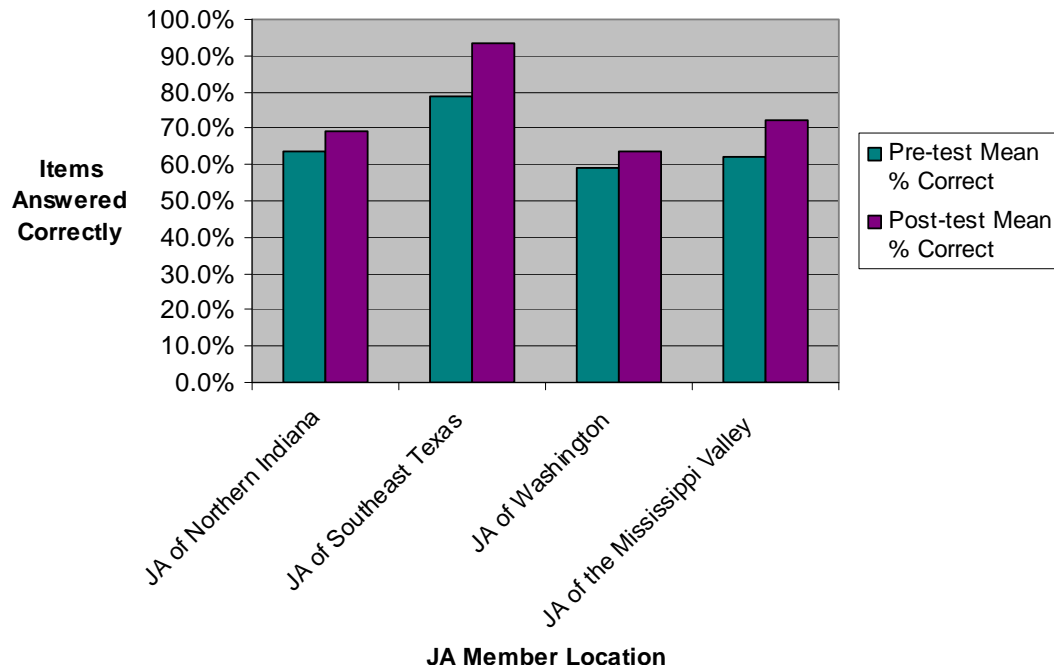
**Table 9**  
Student Pre-/Post-test Results by JA Member Location

Location	Sample Size	Pre-test Mean % Correct	Post-test Mean % Correct	2-tailed Significance
JA of Northern Indiana	n=50	63.6%	69.1%	0.006**
JA of Southeast Texas	27	78.8	93.6	0.000**
JA of Washington	45	59.1	63.6	0.037*
JA of the Mississippi Valley	52	62.2	72.0	0.000**

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

The results of the pre-/post-test are also presented in **Figure 2**. As displayed, JA of Southeast Texas outperformed the other sites, producing a post-test mean of 94 percent correct, overall.

**Figure 2**  
Student Pre-/Post-test Results by Question



## Students' Attitudes

As discussed in the **Methodology** section, a Student Attitude Questionnaire was included as part of the post-test student surveys to address any changes in students' attitudes resulting from their participation in *JA Finance Park*. The questionnaire included items that addressed students' attitudes toward school and careers, self efficacy, and personal finance.

The first set of questions asked students to indicate the extent to which they had experienced change in their confidence/self-efficacy as related to school and personal finance. As presented in **Tables 10** and **11**, 68-90 percent of students without previous JA experience and 64-87 percent of students with previous JA experience responded positively (e.g. reported that they felt at least a little more confident/capable) to each survey item following their participation in *JA Finance Park*.

**Table 10**  
**Program Class Student Pre-/Post-test Results by Question**  
**Students without Previous JA Experience**  
**(n=174)**

Since you started <i>JA Finance Park</i> , how much <u>more</u> are you...	No change	A little more	A lot more
Confident in your ability to graduate from high school.	28%	46%	27%
Confident about your ability to be successful in the future.	11	46	44
Willing to work hard to succeed in school.	26	38	37
Interested in personal finance.	32	49	19
Confident that you can effectively manage your personal finances.	12	54	34
Aware of your career options.	22	43	35
Confident about making decisions that deal with money.	11	50	39

**Table 11**  
**Program Class Student Pre-/Post-test Results by Question**  
**Students with Previous JA Experience**  
**(n=305)**

Since you started <i>JA Finance Park</i> , how much <u>more</u> are you...	No change	A little more	A lot more
Confident in your ability to graduate from high school.	36%	36%	28%
Confident about your ability to be successful in the future.	16	41	43
Willing to work hard to succeed in school.	32	32	36
Interested in personal finance.	29	47	24
Confident that you can effectively manage your personal finances.	15	46	39
Aware of your career options.	28	37	35
Confident about making decisions that deal with money.	13	46	41

In response to the second set of attitudinal survey items, students were similarly positive. Among students without previous JA experience, 64-86 percent reported that they were at least a little more knowledgeable, capable, and confident in the areas queried. Sixty-two to 85 percent of students with previous JA experience responded positively.

**Table 12**  
**Program Class Student Pre-/Post-test Results by Question**  
**Students without Previous JA Experience**  
**(n=174)**

Since you started <i>JA Finance Park</i> , how much <u>more</u> do you...	No change	A little more	A lot more
Know how to succeed in school.	36%	44%	20%
Believe education is important in getting a good job.	21	33	46
Understand the services provided by financial institutions.	22	54	24
Understand how to develop a personal budget.	14	51	35
Know how to avoid going into debt.	15	44	40
Know what steps to take to get a job.	29	39	32
Believe the way you manage money will affect your future.	13	40	47
Try to complete all your school work, even if it is difficult.	32	39	29
Handle new problems well.	26	49	25

**Table 13**  
**Program Class Student Pre-/Post-test Results by Question**  
**Students with Previous JA Experience**  
**(n=305)**

Since you started <i>JA Finance Park</i> , how much <u>more</u> do you...	No change	A little more	A lot more
Know how to succeed in school.	39%	37%	25%
Believe education is important in getting a good job.	29	22	49
Understand the services provided by financial institutions.	20	52	29
Understand how to develop a personal budget.	15	44	41
Know how to avoid going into debt.	18	33	49
Know what steps to take to get a job.	26	43	31
Believe the way you manage money will affect your future.	19	31	50
Try to complete all your school work, even if it is difficult.	33	33	34
Handle new problems well.	31	41	28

## Student Post-Program Survey

Twenty-five classes from four schools were represented in the student post-program survey (n=654). Three of the schools were middle schools while the fourth was a high school (**Table 14** on the following page).

**Table 14  
Participating Schools  
(n=654)**

School	School Level	Sample Size
School A	Middle School	n=163
School B	Middle School	184
School C	Middle School	215
School D	High School	92

All of the students in the middle schools were in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Those students from the high school were all in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade with the exception of two who were in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade (**Table 15**).

**Table 15  
Grade Level of Students Participating the Program  
(n=654)**

Grade Level	Sample Size
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	n=562
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	2
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	90

The ages of the students ranged from 11 to 19 years old. More than half of the students were 14 years old (58 percent) and nearly a quarter (23 percent) were 13 years old (**Table 16**).

**Table 16  
Age of Students Participating in the Program  
(n=653)**

Age	Sample Size	Percentage
11 Years Old	n=1	<1%
12 Years Old	--	--
13 Years Old	151	23
14 Years Old	376	58
15 Years Old	31	5
16 Years Old	3	<1
17 Years Old	40	6
18 Years Old	49	8
19 Years Old	2	<1

\*Note: one student did not answer.

The gender composition of students who responded was almost perfectly balanced with only 4 percent more males responding than females (**Table 17**).

**Table 17  
Gender of Students Participating in the Program  
(n=643)**

Gender	Sample Size	Percentage
Female	n=308	48%
Male	335	52

When asked to select all ethnic and racial backgrounds that apply, the majority of students identified themselves as Caucasian/White (77 percent), regardless of the school (**Table 18**). None of the other categories listed garnered more than 10 percent of students' responses.

**Table 18**  
**Ethnic and Racial Background of Teachers**  
(n=654)

<b>Ethnicity/Racial Background</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Caucasian/White	n=504	77%
Asian	35	5
African American/Black	50	8
Hispanic/Latino	66	10
Pacific Islander	22	3
American Indian/Alaskan Native	25	4
Other	10	2
Did not answer	11	3

\*Note: this is a multi-response (check all that apply) question.

## Expectations Prior to the Program

When asked during the focus groups what expectations they had before entering the program, students' responses ranged widely from fun to boring to easy to an experience involving more difficult concepts, especially in math, than they had previously encountered.

- *“Before the simulation I thought we were going to sit in a room with the teachers and just do work like we have been doing in class, like they give you papers, you fill them out, and they give you more and more. I didn't think we were going to get to go to different businesses and budget.”*
- *“I expected it to show you how to work in life so you would know what you are supposed to expect with money and stuff.”*
- *“I thought it would be hard and I would probably get lost.”*
- *“I thought there was going to be a lot of math involved.”*

For most students, the program exceeded their initial expectations in that it was fun and applicable to the real world. The exception was a class of senior students who unanimously agreed that the program was too easy for them.

- *“It was a lot better than I thought it would be because it was more realistic than I expected.”*
- *“I thought it was pretty fun because it gets your life situation.”*
- *“I like how they send out the book beforehand because it gives you advance notice on what kind of things you are going to be doing there.”*
- *“I just think it's beneficial in the long run because you'll need it for later. I kind of like to know about banking.”*

## Students' Perceptions of the JA Finance Park Classroom Lessons

### Satisfaction with Length and Difficulty of Content

In the post-program surveys, more than half of the students (63 percent) reported that the length of the lessons was “just right.” However, 12 percent of the students felt that the lessons were “too short” and 25 percent felt the sessions were “too long” (**Table 19**).

**Table 19**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**What did you think about the amount of time your class spent on each lesson?**  
**(n=653)**

Response Options	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Too Short	n=81	12%
Just Right	408	63
Too Long	164	25

Three quarters of the students (73 percent) felt that the difficulty level of the information presented in the program was “just right” (**Table 20**). Nearly 20 percent felt that it was “too easy,” while just 8 percent thought it was “too hard.”

**Table 20**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**Overall, what did you think about the information taught in JA Finance Park?**  
**(n=649)**

Response Options	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Too Easy	n=121	19%
Just Right	474	73
Too Hard	54	8

To supplement the post-program survey, students were asked during the focus groups how difficult it was for them to understand the information presented and if there was any information that was too confusing. In general, participants found the concepts easy to grasp although there were a few areas they found more complex than others.

- *“Figuring out house payments. If you want a bigger house it costs more.”*
- *“I thought the hardest part was balancing everything out.”*
- *“I didn’t like trying to figure out how you do your mortgage.”*
- *“I thought budgeting was the hardest because you have a bunch of wants, like, oh I want this, maybe I should get that, and then you find out your total and you’re like a hundred bucks over. You eliminate your wants from your needs.”*
- *“The clothing worksheet was hard because I didn’t understand it was for the month. I thought it was for the whole year. I was on that one forever trying to figure it out. I was thinking, I have two kids, how am I supposed to afford to buy all this stuff?”*

Several students also voiced the opinion that the stocks were difficult because they were time consuming and didn't seem to be integrated into the rest of the financial plan. In addition, a few students felt the concept of taxes was difficult, while others found the math to be arduous.

When asked how the program lessons compared to their regular class work, students reported that *JA Finance Park* was both easier and more engaging than their regular class work, primarily because the concepts were applicable to real life and also because students were able to work with a level of independence from the teacher while collaborating with other students.

- *"It's a lot better than regular class work. You actually get to do the things on your own, and you know what you're doing, too, instead of doing a bunch of stuff you are never going to use."*
- *"They teach you the net income and all that. They don't teach you that in the regular classroom. This involves more life skills."*
- *"When you are in a classroom you do a bunch of papers and you get distracted but you don't get to really move. But in Finance Park you get to move around and do stuff. You ask questions. There was always someone there."*
- *"Finance Park is better because Finance Park gives you more options. I didn't know that you have to buy clothes for your kids and stuff. In class you just sit there by yourself and do paper after paper, but in Finance Park you go into different businesses. You can run into other friends going into different businesses and say 'Let's go into business.' Then they'll help you if you have any questions like what your budget is."*
- *"I think you could feel better about your work because you think you really need this later in the future. So it interests you to actually get it done."*

### Usefulness of Curriculum Content

As depicted in **Table 21**, the majority of the students found what they learned in class somewhat useful (48 percent) or very useful (47 percent).

**Table 21**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**Overall, are the things you learned in class useful in everyday life?**  
(n=652)

Response Options	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Not Useful	n=30	5%
Somewhat Useful	314	48
Very Useful	308	47

### What Students Liked Most and Least about the Classroom Lessons

Of the various activities included in the *JA Finance Park* classroom lessons, students liked working in groups (36 percent) and the games and activities (29 percent) the most,

and liked the student workbook activities (60 percent) and class discussions (20 percent) the least (**Table 22**).

**Table 22**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**What did you like most/least about the classroom lessons?**

Response Options	Like Most		Like Least	
	Sample Size (n=640)	Percentage of Respondents	Sample Size (n=645)	Percentage of Respondents
Student Workbook Activities	n=79	12%	n=389	60%
Class Activities/Games	183	29	23	4
Class Discussions	81	13	132	20
Working in Groups	229	36	38	6
Other	68	10	63	10
Liked It All	2	n/a	7	n/a
Liked Nothing	40	n/a	13	n/a

**Students’ Recommendations for the Classroom Lessons**

On the post-program survey, definite trends arose in students responses to what they would change about the classroom lessons. By far, the most common thing that students would change was the workbook. One hundred seven students specifically used the word “workbook” or “paperwork” or “writing” to say that they would lessen the amount of writing and paperwork the program entailed. The following quotes are a representative sample of students’ responses.

- *“Don’t use the workbook.”*
- *“Spend less time in the workbooks.”*
- *“Less paperwork and a little more activities.”*
- *“Have the lessons go faster and smaller books and more fun.”*
- *“No more workbook pages. They just took up time and I learned nothing.”*
- *“Some of the workbook pages were redundant.”*
- *“Make the workbook straight and to the point and shorter in length.”*
- *“Make the workbook pages more challenging and interesting.”*
- *“I would make the workbook a little more organized.”*
- *“Put stuff together like checks with the check registries.”*
- *“The booklet is very unorganized and crowded.”*

Forty-nine students wrote that they would change the classrooms lessons to be less boring, uninteresting, or elementary. Only 19 of these respondents were from the high school.

- *“More stuff to do.”*
- *“A little more variety.”*
- *“How boring it is.”*
- *“Less repetitive.”*

- *“Make it more interesting.”*
- *“Make it not so tedious.”*
- *“I would increase the difficulty and decrease the time spent on them.”*
- *“Teach information faster.”*
- *“More challenging.”*
- *“Not so remedial and provide different levels of the program.”*
- *“I would make it far more complicated.”*

Eighty-six students asked that the classroom lessons be more fun or more active. Many students wrote that they felt they were being asked to sit for too long or that they would have liked for the classroom lessons to include more hands-on activities and activities.

- *“I would choose more games, because my homeroom didn’t play games.”*
- *“I would change how fun and hands on it was; we just worked on paper the whole time.”*
- *“I wish we could have done more activities and games.”*
- *“To be more active, because sitting there so long will make a student get bored.”*
- *“Do more hands-on instead of just working from the book.”*

Many students used the word “realistic” to describe the types of changes they would make. Students suggested that the program include more hands-on activities for learning about how to manage stocks, use checkbooks, or deal with taxes, indicating a desire on the part of students to make the program as realistic as possible so as to prepare them for adult life. The following quotes were gathered as a representative sample of the 58 suggestions that were made.

- *“Provide more problems discussing people our own age.”*
- *“A little more realistic living choices.”*
- *“Let us have a job.”*
- *“Make the computer program more realistic.”*
- *“We should also have the money that our spouse makes.”*
- *“Give more description about the social security.”*
- *“I would have a tax refund where kids fill out their taxes and get their money back.”*
- *“I would teach how to pay taxes and bills by mail and how to apply for jobs.”*
- *“Make it to where it’s like you really had the credit and cash like in real life.”*
- *“Get fake money so we could learn how to take care of it.”*
- *“More emphasis on setting up a financial plan for the future.”*
- *“Focus more on how to spend money wisely.”*
- *“Don’t require students to spend an amount of money; there are some things you don’t need in life and they made you buy it.”*
- *“Make it where you don’t just pay bills but buy other stuff.”*
- *“Learn more about checkbooks.”*

- “Add more places that are more popular (e.g., U.S. Cellular, change food court to Subway).”
- “Make [the class work] more relevant to the actual Finance Park, like more real situations similar to the JA ‘experience.’”
- “They should give us the prices of things instead of us having to find it.”

## Students’ Perceptions of the JA Finance Park Site Visit

### Level of Preparedness

To gauge students’ level of preparedness for the simulation, they were asked how well the classroom lessons taught by their teacher prepared them. As displayed in **Table 23**, most of the students reported that the lessons worked “pretty well” (61 percent) and a third said they were “great” (33 percent).

**Table 23**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**How well did the classroom lessons prepare you for the JA Finance Park visit?**  
**(n=646)**

Response Options	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Great	n=209	33%
Pretty Well	396	61
Not at All	41	6

### Satisfaction with Simulation Length and Difficulty of Activities

More than half of the students (58 percent) felt that the time they spent at the simulation was “just right” (**Table 24**).

**Table 24**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**What did you think about the amount of time your class spent at the JA Finance Park visit?**  
**(n=642)**

Response Options	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Too Short	n=147	23%
Just Right	370	58
Too Long	125	19

The majority of the students (74 percent) also felt that the difficulty level of the activities they were asked to participate in during the simulation was “just right” (**Table 25** on the following page).

**Table 25**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**What did you think about the activities you did at the JA Finance Park visit?**  
**(n=639)**

Response Options	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Too Easy	n=130	20%
Just Right	473	74
Too Hard	36	6

### Ratings of Simulation and Its Components

The students were also asked to grade the simulation overall. As shown in **Table 26**, nearly half (47 percent) of the students would grade the simulation an A. A little over a third (35 percent) of the students would grade the simulation a B.

**Table 26**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**Overall, how would you grade the JA Finance Park visit?**  
**(n=640)**

Grade				
A	B	C	D	F
n=302	n=222	n=77	n=16	n=23
47%	35%	12%	2%	4%

The success of the simulations consisted of several components, such as the adults (volunteers and staff), technology, and location. **Table 27** shows that the majority of students would give a grade of A or B to the helpfulness of the adults present (84 percent), the technology used (77 percent), and the rooms and setting (79 percent) of the simulation.

**Table 27**  
**Student Responses to Various Simulation Components**

How would you grade...	Sample Size	Grade				
		A	B	C	D	F
The helpfulness of the adults at the JA Finance Park visit?	n=639	n=368	n=167	n=68	n=14	n=22
		58%	26%	11%	2%	3%
The technology used during the JA Finance Park visit?	642	n=275	n=221	n=89	n=35	n=22
		43%	34%	14%	6%	3%
The rooms and setting of the JA Finance Park visit?	639	n=307	n=201	n=80	n=35	n=16
		48%	31%	13%	5%	3%

### What Students Liked Most about the Simulation

To garner more detailed information about students' perceptions of the simulation, they were asked on the post-program survey to state what they liked most and least about the simulation, as well as what they would change. Student responses detailing what they liked most are grouped by trend and presented in **Table 28** on the following page. Students were most likely to indicate that their favorite components of the site visit were the rooms/setting and the freedom/walking around/activities. Representative comments

made by at least 6 percent of responding students are presented thematically below the table.

**Table 28**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**What did you like MOST about the site visit?**  
**(n=654)**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
Rooms/Setting	n=76	12%
Freedom/Walking Around/Activities	65	10
Food/Soda	51	8
Realistic	46	7
Pickings Cars/Houses and Making Purchases	42	6
Bills	40	6
Groups/Friends	37	6
Absent/Did Not Answer	37	6
Learning Something	36	5
Getting out of School	36	5
Budgets	33	5
Acting Like an Adult	22	3
Jobs	21	3
Everything	18	3
Other	18	3
Easy/Fun	17	3
Computers	16	2
Helpful Adults	14	2
Nothing	13	2
Bus Ride	10	2
Stocks	6	1

One of the factors that seemed to greatly contribute to the feeling of reality was the physical rooms and setting of the *JA Finance Park* simulation.

- *“The different stores and companies.”*
- *“What I liked most was seeing all the stores so it looked like a city.”*
- *“The bright environment and going place to place.”*
- *“I liked the cool rooms and the feeling of being in a mini-town.”*
- *“How everything was set up in a circle and not all over the place.”*
- *“It was very organized and I loved the props.”*

Ten percent of the students liked that fact that the simulation was active and that they were able to walk around freely (n=65).

- *“Walking around and looking at all of the places.”*
- *“How we were free to do the things at our own pace.”*
- *”How independent us students were allowed to be.”*
- *”That you got to walk around instead of sitting in the classroom.”*

Seven percent of the students commented on the realistic nature of the simulation as their favorite part (n=46).

- *“It was realistic. You got to buy a car and a house.”*
- *“There were actual business names instead of stupid made up ones.”*
- *“Having to deal with real life situations.”*
- *“We actually got to manage our experiences based on life scenarios.”*
- *“The reality of everything, it is all very useful for later in life.”*

Six percent of students (n=42) liked the element of choice that went along with being adult. Students liked being able to choose their own house or car and making their own decisions.

- *“Picking out the cars and houses and the groups we were in were fun.”*
- *“Buying cars and houses or choosing from a predetermined list of them (which is irritating because the smallest house I could buy had 3 bedrooms and I was married with zero children!!!)”*
- *“Deciding which purchases to make based on the net monthly and annual income.”*

About 12 percent of the students liked the truly financial aspects of the simulation: stocks, budgets, and bills. Thirty-three students (5 percent) liked various aspects of working with a budget and figuring out how to manage their money. A good portion of students specifically liked using the computers to pay their bills.

- *“Working with a net monthly income.”*
- *“It was cool to see how much money was left at the end of the day.”*
- *“Learning more about holding a budget and getting me prepared for the future.”*
- *“We got to learn how to pay our bills.”*
- *“I liked actually paying the bills at each computer. It was kind of fun.”*

Almost fifteen percent of the students liked things that were not aspects of the *JA Finance Park* site visit. Five percent of students (n=36) said they liked that they got out of school for the day. Ten students said they liked the bus ride to and from the simulation and two of them also mentioned that they liked lunch best. Another fifty-one of the students said that what they liked best about the site visit was either lunch or getting to drink soda. Many of the students had pizza for lunch and 14 specifically stated that the pizza they ate for lunch was their favorite part of the whole day.

### **What Students Liked Least about the Simulation**

Students were asked on the post-program survey to state what they liked least about the simulation. Their responses describing what they liked least are organized into groups presented in **Table 29** on the following page. Groupings that garnered at least 5 percent of students' responses are presented below the table with representative comment lists.

**Table 29**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**What did you like LEAST about the site visit?**  
**(n=654)**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
Hard Work and Paperwork	n=110	17%
Boring	60	9
Other	52	7
Mathematics	51	8
Nothing	47	7
Absent/Did Not Answer	38	6
Technical Difficulties	33	5
Rushed and Not Enough Time	30	5
Talking and Lectures	27	4
Setting and Rooms	24	4
Jobs	24	4
Crowded and Long Lines	24	4
Bills	23	3
Food and Soda Issues	22	3
Unrealistic	15	2
Budget	13	2
Stocks	11	2
Sitting on the Ground	11	2
Transportation Issues	8	1
Walking	8	1
Everything	7	1
Unhelpful Adults	7	1
Checkbooks	5	1
Being Treated Like a Child	4	1

Seventeen percent of students (n=110) did not like the amount of work they had to do. Many addressed the program’s paperwork.

- *“Having so many papers to shuffle around and it was almost a complete waste of so much paper.”*
- *“Doing work on a field trip!!”*
- *“There was way too much paperwork! Isn’t there any way you can do more hands-on stuff?”*

Almost 10 percent of students (n=60) said that they felt the experience was boring. However, almost fifty percent of those students (n=28) were high school students. These students wrote that the day was “too easy,” “too long,” and many simply wrote, “boring.”

Close behind the dislike of paperwork was the dislike of doing the number of calculations required during the day. Fifty-one students (8 percent) said that they disliked doing “too much math.”

- *“Adding and subtracting all that and not doing activities with buying things.”*

- “The math was hard.”
- ”I didn’t like that we only did math the whole time.

Many dislikes were logistical. For example, 5 percent of students (n=33) commented on the technical difficulties they had with the computers freezing or crashing and the printers jamming. Twenty-four students did not like the crowds and the long lines. Another 5 percent of students (n=30) felt like they were rushed and did not have enough time. All of these difficulties seemed to be related. The technical difficulties seemed to create longer lines at the computers, which created a time crunch for the students.

**Students’ Recommendations for the Simulation**

The post-program survey also invited students to indicate one thing they would change about the simulation. Their comments were organized into groups and are presented in **Table 30** below. Students were most apt to indicate that they would not change the simulation. Examples of the most common responses are listed below the table.

**Table 30**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**If there were one thing you could change about the Finance Park site visit, what would it be?**  
**(n=654)**

Responses	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Nothing	n=139	21%
Change the Time - More or Less	68	10
Make it Bigger or Change Setting	66	10
Other	57	9
Absent/Did Not Answer	53	8
Let Students Pick or Do the Jobs	46	7
Make It More Challenging/Interesting/Interactive	44	7
Fix the Technology	42	7
Lessen the Amount of Paperwork	38	6
Food	25	4
Make It More Realistic	17	3
Lessen the Amount of Talking	13	2
Less the Amount of Math	11	2
More Groups and Socializing	9	1
Use Credit/Debit Cards	8	1
Provide Chairs	7	1
Everything	5	1
Provide Different Levels	5	1
Make it Less Crowded or Shorter Lines	4	1

Ten percent of the students (n=68) wanted to change the amount of time they spent at the *JA Finance Park* simulation. The majority of these students (n=58) wanted to have more time to complete paperwork. However, a sizeable portion of these students wanted the experience to be shorter (n=10).

- “It would be better for us to stay longer, like a week and really do it and work out the budget and stuff.”

- *“I would visit two days instead of one.”*
- *“The time at the end was quite short, making students frustrated when they didn’t finish.”*
- *“Make it shorter and have less writing.”*

Ten percent of students (n=63) wrote that they would change the JA Finance Park simulation environment. Well over 90 percent of these students said they would make the park bigger and add more rooms. Others suggested improvements like adding more color, changing the music, and including different popular stores.

- *“I would put all the shops out front.”*
- *“Make it bigger for more kids to come.”*
- *“Have more stores.”*
- *“Add more popular companies.”*
- *“More color”*
- *“The music!! I didn’t like it at all.”*

Another group of students wanted more autonomy and more active and engaging work. Forty-six students said they would change the fact that they could not pick their own jobs and that they could not work at them, amongst other job-related aspects.

- *“Have job interviews.”*
- *“More realistic jobs like school teacher, bus driver, grocery bagger, etc.”*
- *“You would get to work your job and maybe even pick it.”*
- *“It would be cool if we actually got to do the jobs.”*

Many students (n=44) said that they would change the simulation by providing more activities and making them more fun, interactive, challenging, hands-on, or generally interesting.

- *“Do more physical things.”*
- *“Make it more interesting, different activities and more interactive.”*
- *“It should be more hands on.”*
- *“I would make it a little bit more exciting.”*
- *“More activities to entertain but learn at the same time.”*
- *“Make it more challenging.”*
- *“Make it more fun and appealing.”*

## **Students’ Overall Experience of the JA Finance Park Program**

### **What Students Learned**

Despite the difficulties cited above, students learned quite a bit from *JA Finance Park*. According to many students’ comments, their awareness of the expensive realities of life and the necessities of budgeting increased. Some students gained new respect for

their parents' responsibilities. Students also reported learning specific skills and concepts including interest, budgeting, and paying taxes.

- *"The longer that you don't pay your debts or pay off your mortgage the more money you end up paying in the long run because of all the interest."*
- *"I learned how to pay taxes and what types of taxes there are."*
- *"I learned there are a lot of expenses in life. You have to pay a lot of money to the government."*
- *"I learned how to do my checking account."*
- *"It is very important to manage what you spend, and really planning out what percentage of your income that you spend is important."*
- *"I learned you need a lot of money. It is amazing—just a lot of money."*
- *"I learned how to spend money more wisely and what opportunity costs I'm giving up."*
- *"I learned that it's not about yourself because I was like, 'oh, that's a nice sports car.' I would have been rolling around in that sports car and then I realized I have two kids."*
- *"You definitely don't realize how much things cost when you are our age. You pick out, like, five shirts and you're like, 'okay, Mom, pay for that.' You don't realize how expensive it is... It made me think."*
- *"My whole life situation was I was single and a mother. My mom is single, and she's a mother, and I can see where she comes from because it's hard to have a kid and budget your money."*
- *"My life situation—I was 34, I was married, and I had two children...I had to find a way to budget for dining out, and I had to get health insurance. I felt like I was going crazy because of how many people were in the family. I didn't realize the hard work it is for my parents to go through taxes and with us always asking for money."*

### Future Relevance

Students were asked if they thought the information they had learned in the program would be useful to them in the future. Students responded affirmatively, referencing the program material's real world applicability. Students were also asked if *JA Finance Park* influenced their future career plans. Most students, while feeling that the program provided valuable information for the future, did not perceive the program to have influenced their career or education plans. A few students, however, reported that after experiencing the program, they decided they wanted a job that pays "great money."

- *"It will help us when we get out into the real world to know how to actually pay bills and everything."*
- *"It is real world information that they give us so it is easy to apply, and we are definitely going to see it again."*
- *"I've never thought of having to worry about starting to save my money so when I get out of college I can afford an apartment. So now, putting it in perspective, it's*

*like wow, that's a lot of money. I can't just blow it all on clothes and I should even attempt to save something so I can actually live."*

### **Overall Interest Level in the Program**

When asked how they liked the program overall, most students indicated that it was either "okay" (49 percent) or "fun" (39 percent).

**Table 31**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**Overall, what did you think about this program?**  
**(n=644)**

<b>Response Options</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>
Boring	n=77	12%
Okay	314	49
Fun	253	39

### **Overall Program Rating**

The post-program survey asked students to rate their overall satisfaction with the program using a one to ten scale ranging from "totally unhappy" to "very happy." Students' mean rating of their satisfaction was 7.3, which indicates a relatively high level of student happiness with the program (**Table 32**).

**Table 32**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**On a Scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being totally unhappy and 10 being very happy, how happy were you with the entire JA Finance Park program?**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	n=13	2%
2	6	1
3	22	3
4	27	4
5	63	10
6	51	8
7	94	15
8	168	26
9	123	19
10	69	11

### Willingness to Recommend the Program to Others

When asked if they would recommend *JA Finance Park* to a friend, the majority of the students (83 percent) said they would (**Table 33**). Students who said that they would not recommend this program to a friend (17 percent) were further prompted to provide an explanation. Of the 106 students who said they would not recommend the program to their friend, a common explanation provided for their response was that they found the program to be “*boring*” (n=46).

**Table 33**  
**Student Responses to the Question:**  
**Would you recommend this program to a friend?**  
**(n=642)**

Response Options	Sample Size	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	n=536	83%
No	106	17
Explanations of Those Who Answered “No”	Sample Size	Percentage of Those Who Answered “No”
Boring	n=46	43%
Other	21	21
Too much work/Not fun	15	14
Too elementary	11	10
My friends wouldn't be interested	9	8
Did not answer	4	4

### What Students Liked Most and Least

Students shared in the focus groups that they enjoyed many aspects of the program including budgeting, Life Situation Cards, picking out houses, and the simulation. In addition, students liked the idea that the concepts covered in the program were directly useful for real life and placed them in the role of adults.

Although students generally enjoyed most aspects of the program, especially in comparison with regular class work, focus group participants reported that they least liked the repetitious math and worksheets. Other students mentioned issues with the workbooks, checkbooks, and credit cards. A few students felt that, although the stocks were important, they weren't integrated into the program in a way that made sense. Further, one senior class involved in the program felt the work was too basic for them.

- *“I think we should do the checkbook as we go instead of after because in your life you are not going to spend all your money and then be like, ‘oh, I still have to fill out my checkbook?’”*
- *“It would be nice to come up with a paper that helps you keep track of how much you have on your credit cards because you don't know what you are putting on your credit card.”*
- *“I didn't like the grocery list. We didn't know the prices of things. We couldn't pull them up.”*

- *“I enjoyed least how slow it goes at some points because most of us, especially the K level classes have already sat down with their parents. I know I have multiple times. I’ve already got a pretty good grasp on how everything works. This was really taking it back to square one and starting over.*”

## Classroom Observation Narrative

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To gain first-hand evidence of how the program was implemented at participating schools, an ETI staff member conducted classroom observations of program sites at each of the four participating JA Member offices. **Table 34** displays the program sites observed.

**Table 34**  
**Breakdown of Classroom Observations**

JA Site/City	Date	Grade Level
Auburn, WA	March 10, 2008	8 <sup>th</sup>
Lagrange, IN	March 20, 2008	8 <sup>th</sup>
St. Louis, MO	March 26, 2008	9 <sup>th</sup>
Houston, TX	March 27, 2008	12 <sup>th</sup>

### Auburn, Washington

At the Auburn location, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who participated in *JA Finance Park* were taught the program as part of their home room period. The classroom observation was held the morning before the students participated in the simulation. Upon entering the classroom, students picked up Student Workbooks and calculators from the back of the room. A list of important Student Workbook pages was listed on the whiteboard. The teacher instructed the students to put all non-JA materials away and moved one particularly disruptive student to the front of the classroom to be near her while she taught the lesson. There were 23 students in the class, 15 of whom were academically low-performing special education students with difficulty paying attention.

The teacher began with a review of the Life Situation Cards and provided students with an overview of what they could expect at the simulation. During the observation, students worked on completing Student Workbook pages 73-75, exercises which required them to calculate net monthly income (NMI), budget guidelines, and established expenses from the Life Situation Cards. She also reviewed the conversion of percentages to decimals, providing examples on an overhead transparency. She called on students to report their NMIs in order to ensure that students had filled out this section during the previous class and to demonstrate the fact that each student’s NMI is different. Halfway through the class, two teaching assistants (TAs) came in to help students who required one-on-one attention or who had been absent during the previous lessons. Students were instructed to fill out Student Workbook pages 74 and 75, and while they were doing this, the teacher and TAs circulated the room helping and monitoring student progress.

Toward the end of the class, students were given a chance to look through a car, home, or apartment catalogue to investigate the options in their budget range. Prior to looking through the catalogues, the teacher explained that for car and home purchases, they would have to determine a monthly payment for their chosen loan period. The teacher and TAs encouraged students to make good choices as they provided individual support.

The noise level of the class was high and became louder as the hour went by. A couple of the students, reprimanded several times over the class period, became more disruptive toward the end of the class. Overall, however, the students listened when their teacher spoke and for the most part remained on task and filled in the assigned workbook pages.

## Lagrange, Indiana

The classroom observation was conducted the day following the students' visit to the *JA Finance Park* simulation. As the students entered the room they were instructed that their first task would be to complete the *JA Finance Park* post-program survey.

After completing the post-survey, students were asked to complete a 10-minute reflective writing assignment (Student Workbook page 95) where they explained how their perceptions of money had changed. Students worked quietly and diligently on the assignment and almost all were focused on the assigned task. The task did not include a discussion of students' responses.

After the writing assignment was complete, the instructor transitioned the students into a 25-minute discussion about the difference between a job and a career (Unit 7). Through open dialogue, students learned that a job is primarily focused on making money, whereas, the teacher explained, a career *"is something you'll do for the majority of your adult life. You have education or training. You're likely paid on a contract rather than hourly."* The teacher then worked through an example, asking students to compare the annual salary of a minimum wage earner (\$13,624) to the lowest salary earned by a student at the *JA Finance Park* simulation (\$21,000). The teacher explained that many jobs in Lagrange, Indiana are minimum wage jobs, and that students should consider what it takes to live on a specific amount of money, as well as their personal interests, values, and skills. She encouraged students to consider their current situation and values saying, *"Think about how you live now. What you're used to. Is it important for you to live close to your family? If so, you're not going to be able to be a marine biologist. What do you value? You need to consider that. You should consider your interests. Are you interested in animals? If you pass out at the sight of blood, being a doctor or a nurse isn't the job for you."* During the discussion all students were attentive and many actively participated by answering questions and contributing comments about the characteristics of jobs that were important to them. The instructor concluded the discussion by informing students that they would spend the following classroom sessions researching careers in order to learn about the education and skills required, as well as the typical earned income.

The final 26 minutes of the class period was spent with students completing a series of worksheets from the Unit 7 Student Workbook:

- Identifying Personal Characteristics (pg. 98)
- Rating Your Interests (pg. 100)
- Rating Your Work Preferences (pg. 101)

The instructor clearly and effectively explained how to complete the worksheets, working through examples of each with the class as a whole. Students initially complained about completing the worksheets, but shortly afterward they focused on the task at hand and worked on the assignment through the completion of the period.

### **St. Louis, Missouri**

This lesson was observed the day before the class was to attend Finance Park. There were 27 students in the class. This observation was rather short (25 minutes) because the student focus group was conducted during the last 20 minutes of class time.

As the students entered the room the teacher spoke briefly about the type of behavior that he expected at the simulation the following day. Next, he told the class that they would be completing the register activities in preparation for the simulation visit (Student Workbook pages 14 -17, 51 - 55, 60 & 61).

The instructor covered the register activities using a traditional lecture format. He asked questions of the students to make sure that they understood the lesson concepts. They readily responded to his questions and remained attentive and on task throughout the lesson. The behavior of the class was exemplary and nearly all of the students easily grasped the material. In between the lecture phases the students worked diligently on their assigned pages.

The teacher provided additional help to two students who were having more trouble with the work than their peers. A number of students worked in pairs or groups to complete the assigned pages. The instructor demonstrated an excellent rapport with his class and the level of engagement was quite high. The lesson, while fast paced, was well implemented.

### **Houston, Texas**

The classroom observed in Houston, TX was unique in that the program was being taught to a high school class composed of seniors. JA of Southeast Texas made the decision to implement the program in high schools as well as middle and junior high schools in light of the fact that the program aligns well with the high school state requirement mandating all high school students enroll in an Economics class that includes a segment on personal finance. During the previous lesson, students were given Life Situation Cards in groups as there were not enough cards to for each student.

As the students entered the class, they were instructed to complete pages 79-83 of their Student Workbooks in pre-assigned groups. In preparation for this activity, students had been asked to investigate car and home options that corresponded with their assigned income for a homework assignment. However, several students had neglected to complete the assignment. The groups were asked to complete the worksheets collaboratively, agreeing on the best way to spend the money. Although the groups worked with a high level of autonomy, the teacher was available to those students who had questions or needed extra assistance.

The student groups varied in how they approached the worksheets. As expected with group work, some groups worked more collaboratively than others. One group assigned a Life Situation Card of a single parent with an annual income of \$21,000 had difficulties with the assignment, unable to find housing that fit within their budget restrictions. Some students took the assignment more seriously than others, but all remained on task with the exception of one student who had left his workbook at home. Not all of the students were able to complete all of the worksheets, but all were able to complete the first few pages essential to prepare for the following day's simulation.

As a result of their ages, students appeared to make more connections to the real world than the middle school classes observed. For example, one of the students in a group wanted a house. Another student explained, however, that the only house they could afford with their group's income would be in an unsafe neighborhood, although they could afford a relatively nice apartment in a better neighborhood. Also, as the teacher was not aware that they needed information on grocery prices for this lesson, students had to estimate grocery prices. They seemed to have a realistic estimate of the cost of food.

The relationship between the teacher and students was casual and positive. Overall, the students were engaged and focused during the class. During the last five minutes of class, the teacher provided instructions for meeting for the field trip and what she expected in terms of their behavior.

## **Classroom Observation Summary**

Of the four classroom observations conducted, three occurred in the class immediately prior to the simulation and one took place immediately following the simulation. In the classes prior to the simulation, students worked collaboratively and individually to complete workbook pages in the Student Guides. Specifically, students worked with the Life Situation Cards, working collectively to choose life options based on their budgets. In Houston, TX the students made strong connections to the real world. For example, when one student wanted a house with a low income, another student explained that while the only house they could afford with the group's income would be in an unsafe neighborhood, they could afford a relatively nice apartment in another neighborhood. In addition to working with the Life Situation Cards and accompanying catalogs, in the Auburn, WA class the teacher provided an overview of the simulation in order to prepare students. For the class which had just attended the simulation, the instructor

had students complete the program survey in their Student Guides and a reflective writing exercise on *JA Finance Park*. The group also held a substantial discussion on the difference between a job and a career with students actively contributing comments about the characteristics of jobs that were important to them. Student behavior varied across classes with the observers' descriptions ranging from "exemplary" to "disruptive." Overall, however, students engaged with the material in a meaningful way.

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## Simulation Findings

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In addition to taking part in the classroom component of JA Finance Park, each school participating in the program attended a full day simulation in order to apply their new knowledge in a hands-on setting. An ETI staff member conducted simulation observations for one school at each of the four participating JA Member offices. **Table 35** displays the program sites observed. Following the table is a narrative of the day's events for each respective location as observed by a researcher from ETI.

**Table 35**  
**Breakdown of Simulation Observations**

JA Site/City	Grade Level	Date
Auburn, WA	8 <sup>th</sup>	March 11, 2008
Lagrange, IN	8 <sup>th</sup>	March 19, 2008
St. Louis, MO	9 <sup>th</sup>	March 27, 2008
Houston, TX	12 <sup>th</sup>	March 28, 2008

## Simulation Observation Narratives

### Auburn, Washington

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Auburn, Washington attended the simulation over two days due to the school's size and the fact that all classes participated in JA Finance Park. An ETI researcher observed the second simulation attended by 20 parent volunteers, four teachers, three JA staff, and 153 students. The simulation lasted four and half hours.

As the students arrived, a JA staff member presented a Power Point introduction and reminded students that they were responsible for their behavior and actions. The staff continued to provide instructions throughout the day for new tasks.

Following the introduction, students began The Truth Revealed stage of the simulation, opening their Life Situation stickers to disclose their income and family size. Based on this information, students then calculated their Net Monthly Income (NMI) and the minimum and maximum for their budgets which required converting percentages to decimals and multiplication. During the Big Search, students moved among the various businesses to collect billing options. The students then spent a large portion of their remaining time calculating budgets and filling in check registers as part of the Budget Puzzle. After this, students made a Final Commitment to their budgets by paying their

bills at each of the businesses and having their budget verified by a JA staff member. The pace of the day was efficient and modulated although students were rushed towards the end, leaving a few students unable to finalize their budgets.

Teachers monitored student behavior, providing special attention to low-performing students, and the JA hosts worked to keep students on task. Several low-performing students, however, had difficulty maintaining the pace and performing the calculations. They required additional assistance that could not always be provided. In addition, as students engaged in multiple tasks, some students forgot to check the stock market at the correct times and were unable to complete their stock worksheets. Despite these difficulties, students' behavior overall was positive and focused. Students appeared to understand the program's expectations and were able to apply their classroom knowledge to the simulation.

Though overall, the day ran smoothly, minor problems did arise. A few computer glitches interfered slightly with the flow of the simulation, but students were notified of the problem and JA staff worked quickly to fix it. In addition, not all of the volunteers showed up and the teachers had to take over their groups. Some of the parent volunteers who were present seemed uncomfortable or unprepared for the simulation indicating that their one hour of training might not have been sufficient. Even with these challenges, however, the simulation as a whole worked well with JA staff and teachers pitching in to compensate for any difficulties.

## **Lagrange, Indiana**

JA staff members energetically greeted the 81 eighth grade students as they entered the Park. Students were asked to sit on the carpet in the main room while a member of the JA staff provided an overview of the day's events. She explained that students would be given a folder containing their life situation, account number, and Personal Identification Number (PIN), and that students would use these materials throughout the day. During the introduction students were quiet and listened to the instructions attentively.

Following the introduction, students were broken into groups and directed to move to their businesses. Each business had an assigned teacher or volunteer, and as the students logged onto the computers the teachers and volunteers provided them with assistance. Students appeared comfortable interfacing with the computers and sought adult assistance to confirm that they had completed the task correctly.

During the subsequent activity, The Big Search, students visited each business to print out Options Sheets which indicated the budgetary range they could allocate to each purchase (food, clothing, insurance, etc.). Throughout The Big Search, three different groups of students were called away to eat lunch. Students were also expected to check the first set of stock quotes during this portion of the day.

After collecting their Options Sheets, students returned to their businesses to work through a variety of worksheets to develop their budgets. While many students had questions during this portion of the simulation, teachers, JA staff, and volunteers were well-staffed throughout the simulation's various stations and businesses, and students' questions were answered promptly and completely. Students were also instructed to check the second set of stock quotes.

Once their budgets were complete, students began The Final Commitment. They moved among the stations and business to purchase the items they had selected for their budgets, as well as noting the final stock quotes for the day. After making their purchases, students met with a JA staff member who checked their budget in the computer. As students checked out, they were directed to correct any budgetary errors, congratulated for completing their budgets correctly, and encouraged to increase their savings "in the real world."

After all students had completed the final task for the day, they were gathered together once again for a debriefing session. Students were invited to share what they had learned, during which time they offered comments such as, "*Having children is a lot of money,*" and "*Living on your own can be very hard.*" The JA staff person leading the discussion engaged students in dialogue about the difference between needs and wants, the pitfalls of going over one's budget in the real world, and how expensive items such as MP3 players and cell phones may not fit into every budget. The debriefing session was concluded with a discussion of how to increase one's net monthly income. Students suggested that education, job training, and "*getting a better job*" would all serve to increase a net monthly income.

Overall, the simulation ran very smoothly. It was well staffed and both JA staff and adult volunteers appeared comfortable and knowledgeable. The instructions that were given throughout the day were clear and well-timed, and students appeared comfortable with the simulation layout, technology components, and the volunteers.

## **St. Louis, Missouri**

Eighty-seven ninth grade students attended the simulation at the *JA Finance Park* headquarters. JA staff members were enthusiastic as students arrived, greeting them and directing them to sit on the carpet in the main room. As a JA staff member presented the day's events in a prepared PowerPoint slideshow, he explained that students would first receive their life situation, account number, and PIN, and that they would use these materials throughout the day. Students were quiet and attentive during the introduction.

Following the introduction, students were broken into groups and directed to move to their assigned businesses. Each business had 1-2 volunteers, and as the students logged onto the computers the staff and volunteers provided them with assistance. Students appeared comfortable interfacing with the computers, and sought assistance

from their peers when technology questions arose. The students quickly completed their net monthly income, guidelines, actual budget, and student checklist forms.

During the subsequent activity, The Big Search, students visited each business to print out Options Sheets which indicated the budgetary range they could allocate to each purchase (food, clothing, car, etc.). Throughout The Big Search, students were called away to eat lunch based on their color coded groups. All of the typical Finance Park activities were performed except for the stock price check and register verification tasks, which were omitted due to time constraints. The hosts provided the teachers with the materials to conduct those activities back at their schools the following day.

After collecting their Options Sheets, students returned to their businesses to work through a variety of worksheets to develop their budgets. A number of students worked on these activities in pairs or groups by discussing the items that they would purchase depending on the amount of money they had available to them. The hosts and volunteers assisted students with any questions that they had related to the budget activities. Prepared binders at each business assisted the volunteers in answering students' questions.

Once their budgets were complete, students began The Final Commitment. They moved among the stations and businesses to purchase the items they had selected for their budgets. Some of the students changed their purchases when various volunteers indicated that they had overspent. After making the changes, the students had a JA staff member check their budget in the computer. As students checked out, they were congratulated for completing their budgets correctly and encouraged to increase the amount of money that they gave to charity.

After all students had completed the final task for the day, they were gathered together once again for a debriefing session. Students were invited to discuss what they had learned about budgets based on the amount of money that they made in their randomly selected career. When asked by the JA staff member if this experience had changed their career goals, some students noted that, *"I had a lot of money to spend. I had trouble spending everything. It was fun so I would like to get a good job,"* and *"I don't want to work in a bad job because I won't have any money."* The JA staff member also engaged students in dialogue about the difference between net and gross pay and how taxes factor into budgets. He noted that going over one's budget in the real world can negatively impact your lifestyle by ruining your credit rating and making loans more expensive. The debriefing session was concluded with a discussion of the economic term "opportunity cost" where the JA staff member explained that buying something like a new car ties up money that could be put into stocks or savings that would grow over time. Students realized that many of the things that they wanted were not possible within their budgets and that they wanted to get jobs that pay well in real life so that they would be able to afford what they wanted.

Overall, the simulation ran very smoothly. JA staff were extremely well prepared. The Power Point presentation that included detailed examples for completing the forms and

the binders with step-by-step instructions at each business helped the volunteers to answer students' questions easily. The students understood the tasks to be completed and were very comfortable with the Finance Park concepts, forms, and technology.

## **Houston, TX**

Ninety-six high school students (94 seniors and two juniors) attended the *JA Finance Park* simulation located in Houston, TX. The simulation site is not a permanent site, but a Generation II Mobile Unit that travels across the county with transportable equipment and materials. The simulation consisted of two rooms, one with business stations and one which served as a workroom equipped with a slide projector and large screen where students completed worksheets in groups.

As the students arrived, they were divided into groups and assigned "businesses" that were overseen by one or two volunteers. A JA staff member provided opening and general information on the day's activities and communicated to students the goal of their visit: *"to build a good foundation in preparation for financial responsibility."* At this time, students also opened their Life Situation cards. The students then completed their Net Monthly Income (NMI) worksheet, which many students began before receiving instructions, and the Guidelines and Actual Budget worksheet.

Following completion of the worksheets, students moved among the business stations to print out Options Sheets. Students also picked up a Personal Investment Report and recorded opening stock prices. After studying their Option Sheets, students made their final budget decisions and recorded the midday stock prices.

Designed for eighth graders, the simulation was not as mathematically challenging for these older students, and, as a result, they were well ahead of schedule after completing their budgets. During an impromptu talk when students were asked to pause working on their worksheets, the volunteers were given the opportunity to speak about their careers and education. Eight volunteers spoke and all emphasized the importance of attending college.

After lunch, the students finalized their budget decisions by making payments to the appropriate businesses and recording the closing stock prices. Students who finished early were given a crossword puzzle to complete. Approximately one-fifth of the students had to correct their budgets because of calculation errors, and two of the students did not have time to make their payments because they were correcting their budgets, but the majority of students had little difficulty with the calculations.

At the simulation's closing, the students participated in minor cleanup activities and a JA staff member briefly reviewed the day. Students and volunteers were asked to reflect on their experiences and write what they liked best, what they liked least, and any suggestions/recommendations they had on a note card.

Five school personnel were present but were not involved with the simulation and made brief appearances only in order to monitor students' behavior. More than half of the volunteers were Deputy Sheriffs who had previously volunteered for the simulation. The remaining volunteers were business professionals or parents. The 25 volunteers were comfortable with the students and proficient in reviewing student work as needed. Three JA staff were present throughout the day; one JA staff member provided instruction to the students while the other two handled the logistics and technology components of the simulation.

Over the course of the four hour simulation, students were on-task and engaged. Age and maturity level were a significant factor in how students engaged with the material, and students were able to think complexly and practically about their assigned life situations, making sacrifices when necessary.

## Simulation Rating Results

While watching the simulation, observers assigned ratings to measures concerning host (JA staff and volunteer) behaviors as well as student behaviors. The ratings occurred on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is defined as "not at all" and 10 is "extremely" and rated the extent to which specific behaviors occurred. In addition to the numeric rating, a supporting example or comment has been provided to illustrate the mean rating.

### JA Host Behaviors

As exemplified by **Table 36** on the next page, hosts were overwhelmingly viewed as prepared and organized, comfortable presenting the activities/tasks, enthusiastic, clear with directions, and thorough in answering questions. Ratings were more varied and lower on average on the three measures relating to discussion between hosts and students, areas which did not seem to be built-in components of the program (see more in-depth discussion following table).

**Table 36  
JA Staff/Volunteer “Host” Behaviors**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Site 1 Rating</b>	<b>Site 2 Rating</b>	<b>Site 3 Rating</b>	<b>Site 4 Rating</b>	<b>Mean Rating</b>
The hosts were prepared and organized.	10	10	10	9	9.8
The directions given by the hosts were clear and easy to follow.	10	9	10	10	9.8
The hosts appeared comfortable presenting the activities/tasks.	8	10	10	10	9.5
The hosts were enthusiastic when interacting with the students.	8	10	10	10	9.5
The hosts clearly and thoroughly answered the students’ questions.	9	10	9	9	9.3
The hosts encouraged questions and discussion about activities.	7	4	10	9	7.5
The hosts asked the students about their career goals.	6	1	7	6	5
The hosts asked the students about their experiences with personal finance.	1	1	7	8	4.3

In response to the statement, “Hosts encouraged questions and discussion about activities,” observers’ perceptions varied widely (mean=7.5). While students generally appeared comfortable with hosts and volunteers, freely chatting and asking practical and logistical questions one-on-one, the discussions were generally not in-depth. In addition, the simulation format included little in the way of large-scale discussion.

The extent to which hosts were observed asking “students about their career goals” also varied widely across the sites (mean=5). At one site this type of interaction was not observed at all, though it was possible it did occur. At another site some of the hosts mentioned their experiences with their own jobs. Students were asked, at a third site, to pair off and compare careers and salary, then consider their career goals based on the simulation experience. At the final site, students who finished early were given the opportunity to write their career goals on a whiteboard.

Finally, the extent to which “The hosts asked the students about their experiences with personal finance,” was inconsistent across the sites. At two of the sites, while hosts conceivably asked students about their personal finance experience, this behavior was

not observed. At the other two sites, hosts asked students, depending on their ages, about their own or their parents' experiences with saving money, salary, writing checks, and making purchases.

## **Student Behaviors**

Student engagement and success with nearly all facets of the *JA Finance Park* simulation was extremely high. Mirroring the host ratings, however, which pointed to the idea that discussion between students and hosts was not a strong aspect of the simulation, observers noted that students did not consistently ask the hosts about their experiences as they related to the curriculum (**Table 37** on the following page). In some cases volunteers mentioned their own experience without prompting from the students, while in most other cases, this type of discussion was not documented at all.

**Table 37  
Student Behaviors**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Site 1 Rating</b>	<b>Site 2 Rating</b>	<b>Site 3 Rating</b>	<b>Site 4 Rating</b>	<b>Mean Rating</b>
The students were prepared (i.e. paper and pencil for notes, completed necessary Student Workbook worksheets, etc.).	n/a	n/a	n/a	10	10
The students appeared comfortable with the design and layout of the simulation.	10	10	10	10	10
The students respected the hosts and followed their instructions.	10	10	10	10	10
The students asked the hosts questions about the activities/tasks under discussion.	10	10	10	10	10
The students were comfortable with the hosts.	10	10	10	10	10
The students worked well together in their cooperative learning groups.	10	10	10	10	10
The students were respectful to each other.	9	10	10	10	9.8
Overall, the students were engaged in the simulation.	10	10	9	10	9.8
The students were able to successfully complete the activities/tasks required.	8	10	10	10	9.5
The students appeared comfortable interacting with the simulation's technology components.	10	7	10	10	9.3
The students were enthusiastic when interacting with the hosts.	8	10	10	9	9.3
The students appeared to grasp the skills and ideas presented.	7	7	9	10	8.3
The students asked the hosts about their experiences as related to the curriculum.	7	2	1	9	4.8

## Teacher Findings

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In order to understand teachers' perceptions of *JA Finance Park*, ETI researchers invited teachers to participate in an online survey as well as a focus group. Beginning with the online survey results, the findings from both follow.

### Teacher Profile

Most teachers (n=16) identified their ethnic background as Caucasian/White with one respondent selecting Asian and another opting for the Other category. As depicted in **Table 38** below, the teachers participating in *JA Finance Park* reported teaching a wide range of subjects from mathematics to history to leadership. The highest concentrations of teachers were in mathematics (n=7), social studies (n=6), and English (n=6).

**Table 38**  
**Ethnic/Racial Background**  
(n=18)

Number of Years	Sample Size
African American/Black	--
Latino/Hispanic	--
Asian	n=1
Native American/Alaska Native	--
Pacific Islander	--
Caucasian/White	16
Other	1

\*Note: this is a multi-response (check all that apply) question

**Table 39**  
**Subjects Taught by Teachers Participating in *JA Finance Park***  
(n=18)

Number of Years	Sample Size
Mathematics	n=7
Social Studies	6
Economics	1
History	1
Science	1
English	6
Health/Life Skills	1
Leadership	1

\*Note: this is a multi-response (check all that apply) question.

Most teachers (n=15) had participated in previous *JA* programs with two teachers having participated 11 or more times (see **Table 40** on the following page). In addition, almost all teachers (n=15) had previously participated in *JA Finance Park* (see **Table 41** on the following page). Teachers indicated that 8<sup>th</sup> grade was the primary grade level receiving *JA Finance Park* (see **Table 42** on the following page).

**Table 40**  
**Times Participating in JA prior to this Program of JA Finance Park**  
**(n=18)**

Number of Times	Sample Size
This is my first time participating.	n=3
1 time	4
2 times	5
3 times	1
5-7 times	1
8-10 times	2
11 + times	2

**Table 41**  
**Previous Participation in JA Finance Park**  
**(n=18)**

Yes/No	Sample Size
Yes	n=15
No	3

**Table 42**  
**Grade Level of Students Receiving the Program**  
**(n=18)**

Number of Years	Sample Size
6th grade	n=1
7 <sup>th</sup> grade	1
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	18

\*Note: this is a multi-response (check all that apply) question.

## Teacher Program Ratings

### Classroom Materials

Using a one-to-five scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” teachers indicated their level of agreement to a series of statements about the classroom materials (see **Table 43** on the following page). Respondents were also given the option to provide brief, written explanations for their responses. Representative quotes are presented below.

**Table 43**  
**On a Scale of 1 to 5 with 1 Being Strongly Disagree and 5 Being Strongly Agree Teacher Level of Agreement to Statements Regarding Classroom Materials (n=18)**

Statements	Mean Response
The materials were free of stereotyping or bias.	3.2
The materials were of good quality.	3.2
The materials provided made it easy to prepare for each lesson.	3.0
The Guide for Teachers was easy to understand.	2.9
The Guide for Teachers provided a practical, step-by-step description of each lesson.	2.9
The Guide for Teachers and student materials worked well together.	2.9
The materials appealed to me.	2.9
The materials held the students' attention.	2.8
The materials were attractive.	2.8

When teachers were asked to respond to the statement, "The materials provided made it easy to prepare for each lesson," they raised concerns including the level at which the materials engaged students and time constraints. Teachers also indicated that having lesson transparencies would contribute to easy lesson preparation.

- *"Good explanation of the directions for each part."*
- *"The materials were easy to prepare but did not necessarily engage the students."*
- *"With the time constraint, it would have been nicer to get a smaller packet of the necessary worksheets like last year instead of a big booklet. There was no possible way that we could have gotten through the entire workbook within two weeks."*
- *"All copies and transparencies should be provided for educators, so that time does not need to be spent preparing since this is an enrichment curriculum."*
- *"Having the actual overheads would have been nice."*

In responding to the extent to which they found the Guide for Teachers easy to understand, teachers pointed out that some of the supplemental materials were missing. In addition, some teachers thought the page numbers could be more user-friendly.

- *"It was a little hard to follow. Supplemental materials were missing."*
- *"The Life Situation Cards and the Lucky/Unlucky Cards were missing from some Teachers Guides."*
- *"I appreciated the student manual corresponding numbers printed at the top of sheets in the teacher's manual."*
- *"The goal of each lesson was not clearly matched to the lessons steps."*
- *"Sometimes the lesson is found on pages in our manual which are not sequential so we are required to search and flip back and forth."*
- *"Some of the pages are in an odd order that made items difficult to find."*

Again, when addressing the extent to which “The Guide for Teachers and student materials worked well together,” teachers presented the idea that the materials were not set up for streamlined use.

- *“There are times where things don’t exactly line up (page numbers, resource sheets). There are some kinks to work out to make it more teacher-friendly. Overall, once you find the materials, they are a good starting point for the curriculum.”*
- *“There was a lot of flipping back and forth, and the pages in the Teacher Guide do not correspond with the page numbers in the Student Guide.”*

Comments regarding the extent to which materials held the students’ attention indicated mixed reviews, with some teachers observing student interest and others boredom and resistance.

- *“The kids were very attentive and receptive to the information.”*
- *“Perhaps some of the work could be done on the computer.”*
- *“Students were often made to feel as if the lesson were a math lesson, which they automatically resist doing.”*
- *“With many of our students never having had a job, it is difficult at the 8th grade level for many to see the importance and relevance of this material to their lives. Some think it is boring, but then again sometimes reality is boring.”*

As reflected in their responses to the extent to which they found the materials attractive and the extent to which they found the materials appealing, teachers generally agreed that the materials could benefit from:

- *“More pictures/visuals.”*
- *“More graphics would have helped.”*
- *“They could include pictures or different fonts to attract students’ attention.”*
- *“The materials are dry and fairly dull to look at.”*
- *“I did not feel they excited the students.”*

When invited to suggest additional program materials, teachers stressed the need for “more overheads.” Suggestions also emphasized a specific outline of the materials necessary for the simulation and supplemental stock materials. Teachers suggested:

- *“more overheads;”*
- *“more transparencies,”* and
- *“a step-by-step outline of the exact materials needed for the visit to Finance Park.”*

Respondents also commented:

- *“The Student Guide should include option sheets for houses, cars, health insurance, groceries, clothes, etc. The Guide should be as similar to the experience as is possible.”*
- *“For me it would be beneficial to have some stocks with daily or weekly prices that students could track. Also, in our simulation it would be helpful if we were given housing, automobile and some other choices because our small town newspapers are somewhat limited in the availability of resources that can help the students. It seems to work much better when we actually visit Finance Park on our field trip, because this information is provided.”*
- *“I would like a week’s worth of stock quotes and more options for unit 4 (houses, furniture, cars, etc.).”*

Teachers were also requested to assign an overall rating for the classroom materials from extremely unsatisfactory to exceptional. All teachers found the materials satisfactory and above (**Table 44**).

**Table 44**  
**Teacher Ratings of the Classroom Materials Overall**  
(n=18)

Extremely Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Exceptional	Mean
--	--	n=8	n=8	n=2	3.7

## Classroom Curriculum

Using a one-to-five scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” teachers indicated their level of agreement to a series of statements about the classroom curriculum (see **Table 45** on the following page). Respondents were also given the option to provide brief, written explanations for their responses.

**Table 45**  
**On a Scale of 1 to 5 with 1 Being Strongly Disagree and 5 Being Strongly Agree Teacher Level of Agreement to Statements Regarding Classroom Curriculum (n=18)**

Statements	Mean Response
The curriculum was applicable to the “real world.”	3.5
The information in the curriculum conveyed the program’s concepts to the students.	3.2
I felt comfortable teaching the curriculum.	3.2
The curriculum met the standards required by the state, district, and school.	3.0
The curriculum was age-appropriate.	2.8
The curriculum resulted in a high level of student participation.	2.8
The curriculum encouraged students’ creativity and imagination.	2.8
The curriculum held the students’ attention.	2.7
The curriculum aligned well with my regular course curriculum.	2.2

Several teachers suggested that, although they thought the content of the program useful, students would have been better served by *JA Finance Park* at a higher grade level when the financial skills were more applicable to their real life situations.

- *“I feel this is a good program and contains things that our students need to know.”*
- *“It is hard to respond to its real world applicability accurately because eighth graders have not worked, planned budgets, and know little about house mortgages, etc.”*
- *“It would probably have more meaning to a high school age student, but many of our students have the maturity to do the work and the foresight to see how this curriculum will benefit them in the future.”*
- *“The curriculum would be more appropriate for students in 9th grade, since that is when most students have jobs and bills.”*
- *“It may be better for freshmen who are going out and getting jobs.”*

Teachers generally reported feeling comfortable teaching the curriculum, although one teacher stated, *“I have not had previous training and would have felt better if that had happened.”*

Teachers agreed (mean=3.0) that the curriculum met academic standards.

- *“The curriculum meets some language and possibly math standards, but not really science.”*
- *“It didn’t have much to do with the English standards.”*

Again, teachers emphasized that students were most engaged with the program when the curriculum focused on hands-on activities with one respondent stating, *“The students were very involved at Finance Park but not so much at school. They complained about having to do a lot of work.”*

Teachers varied in their perceptions of the extent to which “The curriculum encouraged students’ creativity and imagination.” One comment reiterated the idea that the appearance of the materials detracted from their potential value for student learning.

- *“They would have liked more games.”*
- *“While encouraging students was the intent, the materials were not exciting to look at and thus made the students less inclined to be excited and creative.”*

While teachers generally agreed (mean=2.7) that “The curriculum held the students’ attention,” some teachers suggested that the curriculum had the potential for more student engagement.

- *“They would have liked it to be more hands-on.”*
- *“It needed more anticipatory beginnings that served to excite students for the upcoming lesson.”*
- *“Some of the students fail to see how this curriculum relates to them as 8<sup>th</sup> graders who have never held a job or who don't even have a checking account. Some think it boring, but when I have to sit down and make out bills it is not actually the highlight of my week either, but it is necessary.”*

Although teachers did not generally agree (mean=2.2) that *JA Finance Park* aligned with the regular curriculum, some teachers reported finding avenues to integrate the program.

- *“I teach pre-20th century history. It is a bit of a stretch. Fortunately, we have an advisory type program in the morning for which we taught the JA curriculum.”*
- *“At one point in the year, we do a careers unit so it aligns with that.”*
- *“I teach English so I wish there was vocabulary that went along with the book as pre-reading.”*
- *“I really like the program. In my district/state, there is NO personal finance taught.”*

## **Classroom Curriculum Overall**

As shown in **Table 46** on the following page, teachers indicated that they were satisfied with the overall program curriculum (mean=3.8). In addition, a majority of teachers (72.2 percent) indicated their approval of the length of the individual lessons (see **Table 47** on the following page). Teachers were less in agreement about the length of the program overall with half (50 percent) of teachers reporting that the length was “just right” and almost 40 percent indicating that they thought it was “too long” (see **Table 48** on the following page).

**Table 46**  
**Teacher Ratings of the Classroom Curriculum Overall**  
**(n=18)**

Extremely Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Exceptional	Mean
--	--	n=7	n=8	n=3	3.8

**Table 47**  
**Teacher Ratings of Length of Individual Lessons**  
**(n=18)**

Length of Lessons	Respondents	Percent
Too short	n=1	6%
Just right	13	72
Too long	4	22

**Table 48**  
**Teacher Ratings of the Length of the Program Overall**

Length of Program Overall	Respondents	Percent
Too short	n=2	11%
Just right	9	50
Too long	7	39

## Simulation

When asked to indicate if the simulation they attended was located in a mobile unit or a permanent site at a JA Office, all teachers reported having attended the simulation at a JA Office.<sup>4</sup> When asked whether or not they had received enough information from JA to prepare them for the simulation, the majority of teachers (89 percent) indicated that they had. In addition, almost all (94 percent) respondents agreed that the length of the simulation was just right (**Table 49**).

**Table 49**  
**Teacher Ratings of the Length of the Simulation**  
**(n=18)**

Length of Program Overall	Respondents	Percent
Too short	n=1	6%
Just right	17	94
Too long	--	--

When asked to respond “yes” or “no” to whether or not they had been able to complete the required lessons prior to the simulation, more than half (61 percent) of teachers reported that they were unable to complete them. Teachers cited time constraints and receiving the materials late as the reasons.

- *“We were not able to complete all of them due to time constraints and us getting the new program late. Also, we had several weather delays which changed our daily schedule and decreased our planned time for the curriculum.”*

<sup>4</sup> The Houston TX simulation took place in a mobile unit. Because ETI did not receive surveys from this participating site, however, this information was not reflected in the survey data.

- “Since my school was piloting a new program, the materials arrived about a month later than usual.”
- “We got the new materials late, and had to skip certain lessons.”
- “My district was not prompt in deciding to go ahead with the program resulting in not enough time to complete the lessons.”
- “We received the materials too late. We had less than two weeks to cover the workbook.”
- “We did many of the lessons, some in every unit, but not everything. There just isn't enough time in the school year!”
- “We teach the lessons during homeroom period and there was not enough time to teach in-depth.”

Respondents were invited to rate various aspects of the simulation on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being extremely unsatisfactory and 5 being exceptional (**Table 50**). In addition, respondents provided comments to further elucidate the ratings.

**Table 50**  
**On a Scale of 1 to 5 with 1 Being Extremely Unsatisfactory and 5 Being Exceptional Teacher Rating of Aspects of the Simulation (n=18)**

Statements	Mean Response
Space provided for the simulation.	4.6
Facility layout and design	4.6
Students' level of engagement	4.3
Relationship of the simulation to the “real world”	4.3
Flow of the simulation	4.1
Time allocated to the simulation	4.1
Execution of the simulation	4.1
Students' comfort level with the simulation content.	4.1
Design of the materials.	4.1
Logistics (including preparation, transportation, and scheduling)	3.9
Value the simulation added to the in-class curriculum	3.9
Degree/level of volunteer participation	3.8
Degree to which the simulation was aligned with the course curriculum	3.7

### Student Engagement Level

Respondents reported high levels of student engagement with one teacher further commenting, “I feel all of the students in my small group were really engaged and understood the money crunch. I frequently heard students asking if they really had to spend money on one situation or another because they didn't want to lose more money.”

### Relationship of Simulation to Real World

Though respondents generally agreed that the relationship between the simulation and the real world was substantial, the opinion was expressed that actual market prices and the prices provided in the curriculum were not necessarily comparable.

- *“Housing prices were very low compared to current market— might want to update prices each year.”*
- *“The price of some things, housing too low and cars too high, made some of the simulation unreal. Also, there were no allocations for gasoline prices.”*

### Flow of Simulation

While respondents overall thought the flow of the simulation successful (mean=4.1), one teacher noted that *“The directions during the simulation could have been a little clearer.”*

### Time Allotment

One teacher was of the opinion that the time allotment should have included *“a short debrief while students were still engaged with the simulation.”*

### Simulation Execution

Teachers agreed that the simulation execution was successful, and one respondent elaborated, stating, *“The people on staff did an excellent job explaining the program for the day. Help was provided immediately if there were questions.”*

### Student Comfort Level

Respondents largely agreed that the students’ comfort level with the simulation was appropriate. Two respondents, however, observed that some students struggled with the amount of reading required.

- *“It’s good to get kids out of their comfort zone and learn.”*
- *“Some parts had a large amount of reading that students struggled with. I believe students felt a crunch for time and if someone was there to help, would simply ask what to do instead of reading it themselves. Some struggling readers really had a hard time sorting through what was important in the text.”*
- *“If possible, streamlining the reading may be helpful.”*

### Design of the Materials

Respondents on the whole found the design of the materials well above average (mean=4.1), although one respondent missed *“the scrolling screen the students used to get the stocks from”* while another thought the *“materials were a little outdated.”*

## Volunteer Participation

Respondents reported a relatively high degree/level of volunteer participation (mean=3.8). Issues did arise in this area, however, including the fact that “*some of the parents didn't show up.*” In addition, one teacher noted the difficulty of “*getting that many volunteers.*”

## Simulation Overall

Twelve of the 18 teachers found the simulation to be “exceptional,” while no teachers rated the event less than satisfactory (**Table 51**).

**Table 51**  
**Teacher Ratings of the Simulation Overall**  
**(n=18)**

Extremely Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Exceptional	Mean
--	--	n=3	n=3	n=12	4.5

## Overall

Teachers were asked to respond “yes” or “no” to several statements about *JA Finance Park* overall. For any statements to which they responded “no,” teachers were invited to explain their responses.

Most teachers (83 percent) reported that they had been properly trained for the program. In addition, the majority of respondents (16 of the 18 surveyed) indicated that they would participate in *JA Finance Park* again (**Table 52**).

While most teachers (n=15) reported that they would recommend *JA Finance Park* to other teachers, one teacher demurred on the grounds that it “*doesn't meet state standards.*” Another teacher offered a suggestion for improving students’ engagement levels stating, “*I feel that the program would be more interesting to students if community members were to teach the curriculum. When a teacher presents the information, it seems more like school work rather than important information that is applicable to real life.*”

**Table 52**  
**Teacher responses to statements about JA Finance Park overall.**  
**(n=18)**

Statement	Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
I was properly trained for the program.	Yes	n=15	83%
	No	3	17
I would participate in Junior Achievement again.	Yes	16	89
	No	2	11
I would recommend <i>JA Finance Park</i> to other teachers.	Yes	15	83
	No	3	17

## **Liked Most**

Respondents were asked to state what they liked most about *JA Finance Park*. Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that the program was most successful when students could actively engage with the material and apply it to real life situations.

### **Real Life Application**

Teachers liked:

- *“real application in JA Finance Park;”*
- *“having the students learn what it is like to be an adult and having to budget their money;”*
- *“the real-world application;”*
- *“students applying the skills learned in the classroom to real world situations;”*
- *“showing students the importance of saving money,”* and
- *“frank discussions about money.”*

Teachers also commented:

- *“The site visit is outstanding. Kids have to create a real-world budget based on a variety of factors. “*
- *“I love the way my students were engaged and began to realize the impact of a low paying job, little education/training, and a large family affected their income and financial choices.”*

### **Simulation**

Teachers also liked:

- *“the visit to Finance Park:”*
- *“exceptional organization and smooth running of the day,”* and
- *“excellent people and facilities.”*

Teachers further commented:

- *“I really enjoyed the site visit and feel that the students learned a lot.”*
- *The whole experience at the park was great.”*
- *“I really liked how prepared the staff was.”*
- *“I liked the visit to the Finance Park facility and the simulation.”*

## Liked Least

### Nothing

Several teachers responded that there was “*nothing*” they liked least about the program or that they had “*no complaints*.”

### Logistics/Housekeeping

A few respondents found logistical or housekeeping aspects of the program to be the least appealing including:

- “*the district’s insistence on cutting short our time for the buses;*”
- “*bus ride;*”
- “*dim lighting,*” and
- “*too much paperwork.*”

### Curriculum

Some respondents pointed to specific aspects of the in-class curriculum as less successful than other facets of the program.

- “*The material does take a long amount of time and seems to be somewhat disjointed from the site visit.*”
- “*The curriculum is lengthy.*”
- “*Some of the students were overwhelmed.*”
- “*The curriculum contained too much math to keep students’ interest and needed examples that hit more of their interests.*”
- “*The state tax section was not applicable.*”

### Lack of Student Engagement

One teacher least liked “*Having to fight the kids in homeroom who viewed the program as an infringement on ‘their’ homeroom time and complained about having to do it.*”

### Time Constraints

Finally, several teachers cited time constraints both with the in-class portion of the program and the simulation as their biggest challenges.

- “*Honestly, I wish I had more time to teach the curriculum. We have been unable to teach the full curriculum the past two years. I really think we could extend and deepen the students’ understanding if we were able to give it more time.*”
- “*We were rushed because of when we received the materials.*”

- *“I felt rushed towards the end of the simulation to get everyone done before we had to leave. Almost all students got finished, but it would have been better if we would have had more time there.”*

## Teacher Focus Group

### Perceptions of Student Reactions Overall

When asked how teachers would describe their students’ overall reactions to the program, they indicated that their students had mixed reactions. Teachers responses are grouped thematically below.

#### Real Life Relevance

Teachers indicated that *JA Finance Park* was most effective and most enjoyable for students when they felt like the material had a high level of applicability to real life. Conversely, when students didn’t make the real life connection, they were less engaged.

- *“We have enough students that it runs the gamut. In general, I think the students are excited about it. They like getting out of their regular history curriculum for a while. They love talking about using credit cards and debit cards. Sometimes that’s a dilemma for me because they have so many personal anecdotes they want to tell that spread the lesson out longer than you mean sometimes. But I think it’s well received.”*
- *“I think my kids like it because you can go a lot of different places with it. It’s very real and you are talking about money and kids like money. I find it a great place to start to jump off to a lot of interesting discussions.”*
- *“It’s things they don’t necessarily see why they need. I think some kids finally got it yesterday when they went on a field trip, and they were like, ‘wow, this is really hard.’ They started to get some of the things that maybe they should have understood all the way through. They just don’t see the importance of it.”*
- *“I think overall the students were much more interested in making choices about their car and their clothing and their house. They were much more into that than they were with all of the math work that had to go into preparing for it. I think if it mimicked what they did on the field trip a little bit more their reaction would be a little bit more positive. When we talk about budgets they are interested in it. It’s just all the math that goes into it. I think they feel like its school work and not something extra that they are going to actually apply to their daily lives.”*
- *“The life situation—when they got their cards and stuff in class they really enjoyed that a lot. They really enjoyed the Life Situation Cards and figuring out minimums and maximums.”*
- *“I think most of the kids at least understood the relevance to each one of the lessons, why they would need to know the information although it might not have been something they thought about before.”*

- *“It was very mixed. Some of it was very dry, and they’re lazy. They don’t want to do the math.”*

### **Confusing/Unclear**

Two teachers reported that confusion with the materials contributed in part to students’ ambivalence toward the program.

- *“I think there was some confusion at parts because sometimes the directions were unclear. But overall they were okay on doing the work—no more or less excited or disgruntled than they would be by a regular assignment.”*
- *“A little bit was out of order. We were doing a check registry before we even got to the checks, and so it really confused my kids. They were a little bit confused sometimes and even a couple of them said that the ordering could have been a little bit different.”*

### **Timing**

In a very specific case, teachers at one school indicated that their students were not responding positively to the program because of its implementation during the homeroom period at the end of the day. During this time students had previously had free time to do homework, make-up work, or attend club meetings.

- *“In my room they don’t react positively to the program, and I think that a big reason for that is because the time that we take to teach the program is during the students’ homeroom time. Homeroom time is practically a half hour at the end of every day that they have to work on homework or go to any kind of clubs that they might have or finish up work they owe for other classes.”*
- *“We have gone all year and that’s been kind of their time to do their thing, and now we’re taking two days a week away from them.”*

### **Lessons Most Enjoyed**

When asked what lessons students enjoyed most, teachers explained that students most liked the lessons that were hands on or where they felt like they had a stake in the material including lessons dealing with check writing, the stock market, and life situations.

- *“Talking about those debit cards and credit cards was probably the most enjoyable for them. They were also excited about the checks they got to write.”*
- *“My kids were very interested in the lesson on check writing. From a teacher perspective we would have liked for there to be checks. There were some later, but we would have liked some actual checks to go with the lesson.”*
- *“With my group Unit 4 where they do the activities they will get to do at Finance Park, where they get to pick their car, look for their house. That was the unit they were the most involved in, and it might partially have been because they were*

*actually looking in the newspaper and looking at cars and houses. It was a little bit more hands on than some of the other stuff. In my class that was the one they were the most interested in, that they worked the hardest on.”*

- *“I think also when they looked at being able to pick their companies, doing stock quotes, my class was somewhat engaged in that also.”*
- *“Normally we expand on the stocks and we do some competition. This year because of the shortened time we didn’t, but that seems to be one of the ones they enjoy more.”*
- *“My students like doing the stock market. That intrigued them. I wish that had been done a little more fully.”*
- *“I would say getting their Life Situation Cards was the most enjoyable. They just wanted to see how much they were making, if they had kids, what they could afford to buy and what kind of car they might get.”*

## **Lessons Least Enjoyed**

In recounting the particular lessons or activities students did not seem to like teachers again pointed out that students least enjoyed activities that most resembled traditional schoolwork, including math and reading comprehension. They most enjoyed hands on activities.

- *“Using percents, figuring out budget guidelines—that’s not been enjoyable. It’s harder for them.”*
- *“I think they are kind-of equally engaged in all the lessons in my class. Sometimes that’s with resistance, but they will do it, but they have to use calculators and they think it’s a lot like school work, but I think they get a lot out of it. They probably won’t admit it.”*
- *“When they get to Finance Park they enjoy that. They put it together instead of the little fragments because they have a card that tells them what they are and how much they make and then it’s like a game; it is role playing. But here it is too much like dissection of school work.”*
- *“The reading comprehension. The format of the reading was very dry, long paragraphs. And also the questions they had afterwards, asking them to answer what they just read.”*

## **Challenging Lessons**

Overall, students were most challenged by the technical math aspects of several of the lessons including the budget, credit, savings, and interest rates. In addition, one teacher said that her students were challenged by the concept of stocks.

- *“Some of the math skills were probably the most challenging thing. The one thing I’m sure is beneficial, I’ve been working with math teachers and that helps me. And also it is a bonus for the math program too, I think, because the kids are seeing some practical applications for some of that stuff they’re doing. So I think we probably need to work harder to coordinate it better.”*

- *“There was some confusion when we were doing the actual budget. You really do need to make choices. You cannot pick the maximum on everything. Keep in mind if you use all of your maximums you will go over budget.”*
- *“Credit. It was one of the areas where they really don’t understand how it works, like the interest rate, like savings as well, anything that has a formula attached to it.”*

## Concept Retention

In general, teachers felt like students were retaining the concepts learned in *JA Finance Park* on par with their retention record of other classroom concepts.

- *“They’re retaining some, probably about like usual, with your usual lessons. There are some things we’re going over and over and over, but that’s what you have to do with 8<sup>th</sup> graders.”*
- *“They knew what was expected and they had questions about it. They knew that one thing was tied to another.”*
- *“They’re retaining the concepts they’re interested in. It’s the second time they have been introduced to the program so it is solidifying.”*

## Materials

Teachers were asked to rate the effectiveness of program materials in facilitating students understanding using a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest rating. For those materials assigned a rating under four, teachers were asked to provide an explanation for the rating. Representative quotes are presented below.

**Table 53**  
**On a Scale of 1 to 5 with 1 Being Extremely Unsatisfactory and 5 Being Exceptional**  
**Teacher Ratings of Program Materials**

<b>Program Materials</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Mean Rating</b>
Lucky/Unlucky Chance Cards (Unit 4)	n=3	5.0
Life Situation Cards (Unit 4)	7	4.9
Student Workbooks	9	4.2
Credit “Cards” (Unit 1)	7	4.2
JA Finance Park Video (Unit 4)	3	4.0
Guide for Teachers	9	3.9
Tax Cards (Unit 2)	2	3.5
What If? Cards (Unit 3)	4	3.4
Got To Have It Cards (Unit 1)	3	2.8
The Price We Pay Cards (Unit 2)	3	2.7
Career Cluster Cards (Unit 7)	--	--
Occupation Guide (Unit 7)	--	--

### Lucky/Unlucky Chance Cards

Although the teachers who had the opportunity to use the Lucky/Unlucky Chance cards unanimously reported that they found them effective in facilitating students understanding, several teachers reported never receiving the cards.

### Life Situation Cards

Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that the Life Situation Cards were effective teaching tools, although a few teachers found the salary assignments unrealistic.

- *“The students liked them. They could see that it was their life and there was the amount of money for this and this. For me it’s fun because some kids are making \$98,000 and some are making \$21,000. They were upset about that too. It was fun to have that combination.”*
- *“The only thing I would have to say with those is the salary of \$98,000 and \$74,000 is really a little bit out there. So you might want to make the salaries more down to earth. I had a Life Situation Card with that, and my kids were like wow, we can buy so much. And I said, you better go to college.”*
- *“I’m not saying make them all rich, but \$20,000 and a kid—I think that scenario was so off the charts hard to get and hard to afford food, a house—forget the car. It was really difficult for some of them. That made it difficult for them to really get any kind of perspective on budgeting because it just all seemed impossible. I think they missed the lesson because we wanted to teach them how to budget, not just give up because they don’t have any money.”*

### JA Finance Park Video

Although overall teachers were satisfied with the content of the *JA Finance Park* video, one teacher felt the video could have been more informative while others experienced technical difficulties.

- *“I used it to introduce the whole thing. I thought it worked better that way because it got kids excited from the beginning.”*
- *“The video was good. It was informative. It just needs a little bit more information about what they are really going to be doing.”*
- *“We got a DVD, but it didn’t work. It was all skipped.”*
- *“We had a DVD and it was abbreviated and it had been copied by our district. It started and in five minutes it quit. So it really wasn’t anything to show. It was not worth it. Our district blew it.”*

### Guide for Teachers

Most teachers indicated that the Guide for Teachers was effective. For those who did not assign a high rating, they related that the layout did not contribute to a smooth facilitation of the lessons.

- *“There is a concern I had about it. If there was some way to get the pages to match up easier, because I find myself flipping back and forth through the teacher manual. Maybe the organization can be done a little better so it’s easier to find the student page and the teacher manual.”*
- *“I would like where it says student workbook page to be bigger because I became overwhelmed when I was trying to go over something. You can make the numbers correspond to the kid’s book—page 69.1, 69.2, so then you have all the answer keys and guidance on 69, and you just have to go to 69. When they had a question I’d have to go to mine and flip through and flip through, and it was hard to keep it all straight.”*

### What If? Cards

Of the teachers who had the opportunity to use the cards, a few expressed the view that students did not connect with them.

- *“It did show them that in daily life things do happen. You have to budget. The cushion room helps.”*
- *“There was a whole series of those and we got a few of them in. One of the problems at this age is their empathy factor is low, and they didn’t care. His problem. I would put it more personal with them. You have this situation. This has happened to you. What would you do now?”*
- *“They were average. It didn’t really solidify anything for me. They answered it quickly and then I don’t know if they even retained it.”*

### Gotta Have It Cards

In general teachers agreed that the barrier to using the Got to Have It cards effectively lay in their lack of allure for students.

- *“I didn’t find those particularly useful. I didn’t think the time it took would have been worth the benefit I got from them.”*
- *“They were pretty dry. In teaching we have something called an anticipatory set. It creates a fun mind set to get going. That’s what I would play into it.”*
- *“I didn’t like the game at all. My kids were bored, and it just really didn’t work out. Maybe having different items to buy because not all the classes are college oriented so having bookshelves for dorm rooms doesn’t apply.”*

### Price We Pay Cards

The teachers who had used the Price We Pay cards in their classrooms reported that they did not see a real benefit to the students.

- *“It was entertaining, but it was a quick lesson. They were all surprised to find out there are real taxes. It got them involved, but I don’t think they really saw it.”*

- *“I question the relevance of those weird taxes, what they really had to do with the students because most of them don’t live in Minnesota or Chicago and won’t visit these places.”*

## **Curriculum**

### **Logic of Lesson Order**

When responding to whether or not the lessons built logically, teachers expressed a variety of views ranging from the opinion that the order worked overall to the opinion that the individual lessons were disconnected.

- *“I think they are constructed in a nice order and do a good job of that. The biggest problem is getting them all in because you’ve got the regular curriculum, and this is a great curriculum, but you are adding into a curriculum that is already full.”*
- *“For the most part they built logically, except the checkbook writing and putting that with everything else. They had to find the big things first like the house and car before they worried about clothing and entertainment. So that made sense.”*
- *“It made more sense to me this year because I had done it once before so I could kind of piece it together for the kids—this is where we’re building to whereas last year, the first time going through it, it was a little disconnected.”*
- *“I would say that as it unfolded for us it was confusing for the students. They didn’t see the big picture. They were seeing little pieces until we got to that last part. I would actually start with the general big picture and then grow into the specifics and then come back to the big picture like we do with the life situation.”*
- *“We have check registry before we even get to check writing. I might put that with writing checks because that goes together.”*
- *“The lessons were very individual. They didn’t link; they weren’t connected at all.”*

### **Lesson Pacing**

Teachers overwhelmingly agreed that the pacing of the lessons was appropriate. A few teachers did mention the fact that, due to outside time constraints, they had to establish their own pacing plans, selectively working their way through the curriculum.

- *“I thought the pace was good for the time we had. We paced ourselves, I guess. We basically did 10 days instead of 19 or whatever it’s supposed to be.”*
- *“We just had to pick and choose and we couldn’t do everything. We couldn’t do as many activities days. We were forced to take two days when we really needed three to do everything right with the life situation cards. I want more guidance in what needs to be done.”*

### Extent to Which the Curriculum Contains Valuable Information

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the curriculum contained valuable information relevant to real life. A few teachers pointed out, however, that for all the value it contained, the concepts were beyond some of their students' comprehension. In the case of the eighth graders for whom the curriculum was intended, students would not actually be applying their knowledge to real life for at least another year.

- *"This is more relevant than what they will be tested on. At least this is real life."*
- *"I would rate it very highly on that. Personal finance is statutory now, and it's because kids need to know this stuff, and this is a great introduction to that. I think it's very important stuff. That's how I justify taking about a month out of my regular curriculum."*
- *"I thought the information was very valuable. ... This is the only time they are going to have practical facts thrust in their face."*
- *"Everything in there is valuable—the percentages and the budget planning, that's good. They need to realize they can't spend that much on a car; they can't spend that much on clothes."*
- *"I think all this stuff is important for the kids, but since they have such a long time frame before they are going to be responsible for their own finances, they are going to lose it between now and then."*
- *"Some of it makes sense to them. I pulled out a debit card and a credit card and said, well what are these? They managed to get the concept, and I said okay, which card should I use when I go buy groceries? Well, you use your credit card. Why would I use my credit card? Well, because then the bank pays for it and you don't have to. I said yeah, but I've got to pay for that at some point. So they do understand some of the concepts, but yet they still don't. They still don't realize that it's all going to eventually catch up with them. They are still in the early stages of understanding finance."*
- *"Sometimes it's almost a 9<sup>th</sup> grade subject because kids usually start working when they are in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, not 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Then they have money, they have to budget, they buy their cars and so on. Until they get that first check after making \$6 an hour, and I'm sure they don't count on taxes being taken out, they won't really realize how it works."*

### Curriculum Support for Differentiated Learning Styles

Overall teachers were not convinced that the curriculum did or did not support differentiated learning styles. Respondents noted that the curriculum was partial to students with higher level math skills. Other teachers were of the opinion that the curriculum lent itself to group activities, thereby highlighting students' different abilities.

- *"I think it naturally favors students who excel at math because there is a lot of math involved when you are budgeting."*
- *"Especially when I had the English Language Learners and the low readers, adapting the curriculum was very hard. I ended up having to throw out so many*

*of the activities and tear it down a little bit. It would be nice if they had a second version of it, lessons and activities for the lower readers or the lower math.”*

- *“The graphic organizers and then the questions are good. I like that there’s a variety of that. I’m not sure if it supports the different levels of students. The teacher might just have to do that on their own.”*
- *“It allows a lot of groupings in the activities which lend itself to differentiating if you have different ability groups within your grouping.”*
- *“It’s worked very well for me to have some peer tutoring, have students working with each other. I think it’s worked out quite well to accommodate those differences between students.”*

### **Learning Gaps**

When asked to describe any learning gaps they had noticed in the curriculum, teachers generally agreed that the curriculum was cohesive. Two teachers, however, noted areas for potential emphasis that could cue students in to the real life dangers of overspending.

- *“The ones I’d like to see personally is the danger of credit cards. We introduced them, but the risks that involved credit card debt and making a minimum payment—you can leave your grandkids to keep paying the minimum payment.”*
- *“I think budget overages because in real life we can’t just go back and erase money that we’ve already spent. There were several kids yesterday who made a comment like, well I was only over by \$100. Okay, you were only over \$100 then you are going to be over more because you bounced checks. To them it was just how close. They didn’t get that in real life if you are only over by \$100 you’re in trouble.”*

### **Program’s Contribution to Regular Curriculum**

While all teachers viewed the *JA Finance Park* curriculum as useful, they varied in the degree to which they felt it contributed to their regular curriculum. Some teachers felt like it worked well as a stand-alone program, in the case of one school, a curriculum taught in homeroom. Other teachers felt it directly contributed to the English Language Arts and/or math curricula through its real life relevance.

### **Overall Curriculum**

- *“I think it shows more real life to them. The stuff they learned from JA they are going to go home and tell their parents about it. They can actually use this to think about their parents paying bills and their parents doing all that.”*
- *“Our GRE does include a significant section on economics, and I think we’re able to work in a lot of that. And it was kind of interesting, some of the things we’ve done because just recently they went over the Great Depression and so they connected on the banking and stock market stuff.”*

- *“It would have been difficult to tie it in to my curriculum because I teach pre-twentieth century American history. It would have been somewhat difficult to make the connections so in our format right now, having it in homeroom, works really well.”*
- *“I think it made personal finance better, more relevant. It feels more realistic for them.”*

### **English Language Arts**

- *“It would be nice to have a vocabulary that could be gone over because I spent a lot of time explaining the vocabulary that was being used.”*
- *“For English, prior to this program, we had a career unit that we did. When we started Finance Park we changed that career unit to fit in. We kind-of took what we were doing and JA’s curriculum together. So that one particular unit fit well with English; the others I feel are more math-related.”*

### **Math**

- *“Sometimes the hardest thing is getting the students to understand why we teach percentages and decimal places. This shows real life examples of when we need percentages.”*
- *“It reinforces some of our computation skills. About a third of our kids take algebra, and so it doesn’t go along with their curriculum well. They are way ahead of this stuff.”*

### **Information/Materials for Success**

In responding to whether or not they had the necessary information to successfully teach the program, teachers also specified materials they felt they needed or which were missing from their packets. While overall, teachers felt they had the necessary information and materials to successfully implement the program, activities and materials surrounding stocks were an issue for some teachers. In addition, some teachers reported never having received the Life Situation Cards and Lucky/Unlucky Chance cards.

- *“I think we have what we need in the packet of materials, but I also feel that if there’s something I need I could probably get in touch with somebody down at JA. They have been extremely helpful. I don’t think there were any significant gaps, but I think they would help us if we needed it.”*
- *“Our local newspapers here are not the big city, and they don’t have stock quotes unless we go out of our way to get a larger paper. The activity where you have to follow the quotes for five days is really kind of tough to do. There’s a lot of planning and expense so just some examples of 20 different stocks and maybe a fictitious stock over a couple of days would be helpful in that unit.”*
- *“It would be nice with the stock if, in the beginning of the school year, a kid can have a certain amount of money and buy stocks and then they track those*

*throughout the year. Then when they actually go down to the simulation they could have real stock quotes. It would be more meaningful. Then rather than having them check their stock prices three times throughout the day, they only have to check once based on what they chose earlier. That took a lot of time yesterday, and a lot of the kids missed one or the other so they ended up playing catch up, and that didn't do a whole lot for them."*

- *"The new book didn't have some of the transparencies they included in the teachers' editions before. Some of us took the ones from previous years or made our own copies."*

## **Successes and Challenges of the Program**

### **Successes**

The greatest successes, from the point of view of the teachers, seemed to reside in the program's pertinence to real life and in the view that *JA Finance Park* bolstered the regular curriculum. Teachers further noted that the simulation successfully functioned to bring together concept and practice.

- *"The greatest success for me is watching the students get more involved in some of this curriculum. This economics stuff can be dry sometimes, but it gets them hooked into some of that. I know there's more banking and personal finance than economics, but it's kind of a lead in, and seeing them get excited about that has got to be the greatest success."*
- *"I think the Great Depression and the stock market crash have already got some new meaning for students. Watching, trying to read the stock market charts and get the prices, I think lent some more meaning to that. I also believe as they go into high school every now and then something will be said that will ring a bell because they've heard some of it before. So that's a big success."*
- *"I think the hands-on simulation is definitely the highlight. They are practicing; they just really get a feel for budgeting and money."*
- *"It's all choices. You have to choose whether you want to spend your money on your house or your healthcare or your car and then go through the various options in healthcare. I just think those sorts of discussions are real, and they are difficult for the kids to understand. This is complex stuff, but it provides a set opportunity to have a discussion."*
- *"I like the fact this is a wakeup call. We tell them we are trying to prepare them for the future and they just look at us blank-eyed. Now we can say to them, look, remember, you make the money, you get the better car, the better insurance, the better this, that."*
- *"We just keep going back to the actual budget. The whole goal of this is to learn to live within a budget. I think that it does adequately show them that life is expensive since most of them are still under their parents, but very soon will be out on their own."*

## Challenges

Time proved to be a challenge for nearly all of the teachers. Time issues included making room in the regular curriculum and finishing the curriculum before attending the simulation. Aside from these issues, teachers noted challenges ranging from student attitudes toward life to recruiting adult volunteers. Overall, however, they indicated that the program operated smoothly and successfully.

- *“Time. And I hate to have to cut anything, but it is hard. The resources and materials—I would never say to cut them, just realize that people won’t be able to do every single item.”*
- *“I don’t think it has got any great challenges. It is really well designed. The only thing is with our state, the fact that we don’t have income tax kind-of threw them.”*
- *“Probably one of the biggest challenges is getting adult volunteers. Some of the adults are working during the day or have other kids to take care of. It’s hard to get them to go, and once we do, getting them trained is difficult. I think it’s great that they have this online. It would be great if they could go in for that hour of training before, but it’s almost a two hour drive. It just doesn’t work for us.”*
- *“The biggest challenge that all of us have is that these kids are in a world where they have instant gratification. That’s what they want. And we’re asking them to look down the road into the future.”*
- *“I know for us we don’t have time to do the whole pre-curriculum before going to Finance Park, so I don’t know if that’s a challenge for the program as a whole.”*

## Additional Comments

Finally, teachers were asked to provide any additional comments they had.

- *“I think it would be more of interest to the kids in general if this was an ongoing budget rather than an isolated one month budget. If it was over the period of a year you could get a realistic picture over time—are you above your budget, below your budget, in debt?”*

## JA Staff Findings

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In an effort to develop a well-rounded understanding of JA staff perceptions of *JA Finance Park*, ETI researchers invited JA Member staff to participate in an online survey as well as a focus group. Beginning with the online survey results, the findings from both follow.

### JA Staff Profile

When JA staff members were asked how many years they had worked for JA, they reported experience ranging from one year (n=3) to 17 years (n=1) (see **Table 54** on

the following page). JA staff had worked with *JA Finance Park* for lengths of time varying from less than one year (n=1) to four years (n=4) (see **Table 55** on the following page). JA staff indicated on the survey that the students receiving the program spanned the middle and high school grades (see **Table 56** on the following page).

**Table 54**  
**Number of Years Working for JA**  
(n=7)

Number of Years	Sample Size
1 year	n=3
3 years	2
6 years	1
17 years	1

**Table 55**  
**Number of Years Working with Finance Park**  
(n=7)

Number of Years	Sample Size
Less than a year	n=1
1 year	4
3 years	1
4 years	1

**Table 56**  
**Grade Level of Students Receiving the Program**  
(n=7)

Number of Years	Sample Size
7 <sup>th</sup> grade	n=4
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	6
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	1
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	2
9 <sup>th</sup> -12th	4

\*Note: this is a multi-response (check all that apply) question.

## JA Staff Program Ratings

Using a five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” JA Member staff indicated, via online surveys, their level of agreement to a series of statements about the program materials, curriculum, simulation, and teachers and volunteers for *JA Finance Park*. Respondents were also given the option to provide brief, written explanations for their ratings. To ascertain ratings for the quality of the program materials and program overall, respondents were asked to use a five point scale ranging from “extremely unsatisfactory” to “exceptional.”

### Program Materials

Overall, respondents agreed that the materials were attractive, of good quality, and appealing (see **Table 57** on the following page) with one respondent adding that they

were “fun and inviting.” In a minor suggestion for improvement, one respondent wanted to see “more icons/pictures on all of the worksheets”.

**Table 57**  
**On a Scale of 1 to 5 with 1 Being Strongly Disagree and 5 Being Strongly Agree JA Staff Level of Agreement to Statements Regarding Program Materials (n=7)**

Statements	Mean Response
The materials were attractive.	3.1
The materials were of good quality.	3.3
The materials appealed to me.	3.3

When asked to rate the program materials overall by categorizing them on a scale ranging from “extremely unsatisfactory” to “exceptional,” all respondents indicated the materials were either “good” (n=5) or “exceptional” (n=2).

**Table 58**  
**JA Staff Ratings of the Program Materials Overall (n=7)**

Extremely Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Exceptional	Mean
--	--	--	5	2	4.3

## Program Curriculum

Again using a five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree,” JA Member staff indicated their level of agreement to a series of statements about the program curriculum for *JA Finance Park*.

As depicted by **Table 59** on the following page, respondents had some difficulty agreeing that “The curriculum met the standards required by the state, district, and school.” In explanation, one respondent pointed to Social Studies content that did not easily lend itself to finance (early US history), lack of financial literacy standards, and lack of connection to current math standards.

While respondents generally agreed that “The curriculum was age-appropriate” (see **Table 59** on the following page), two respondents commented that the curriculum could benefit from being made more relevant to students’ lives.

- “I would like to see more examples that middle students can relate to and apply in their personal lives.”
- “I believe we could do a better job of making all the lessons more engaging and relevant for the students.”

In addition, one respondent wanted the curriculum to be applicable within the age-appropriate range stating, “I do wish we had different levels for gifted students or students with special needs.”

Table 59  
On a Scale of 1 to 5 with 1 Being Strongly Disagree and 5 Being Strongly Agree JA Staff Level of Agreement to Statements Regarding Program Curriculum (n=7)

Statements	Mean Response
The curriculum met the standards required by the state, district, and school	2.9
The curriculum was age-appropriate.	3.3

## Program Simulation

JA Member staff overwhelmingly agreed that “The simulation added value to the in-class curriculum” (see **Table 60** on following page). One respondent elaborated stating, *“Having the simulation as the culminating experience for students is a very powerful motivator and provides an opportunity for the students to show what they learned in class in an authentic manner.”*

Respondents did not report great difficulties with logistics (mean=3.0) though they did admit that *“there are many pieces to manage that can be overwhelming when first beginning the program.”*

While respondents agreed (mean=3.6) that “Volunteers were helpful to students during the simulation,” they also explained that the integral support they provide is not necessarily consistent.

- *“Much of the simulation depends on the experience of the JA Staff, and the quality and number of volunteers.”*
- *“Some visit days the volunteers are more helpful than on other days.”*
- *“There are many details that the volunteers need to remember from training or find in their volunteer binder. If they give kids the wrong information it can cause issues for the kids during the day.”*

**Table 60**  
**On a Scale of 1 to 5 with 1 Being Strongly Disagree and 5 Being Strongly Agree JA Staff Level of Agreement to Statements Regarding Program Simulation (n=7)**

Statements	Mean Response
The simulation added value to the in-class curriculum.	3.9
The simulation was well aligned with the in-class curriculum.	3.7
Students appeared engaged during the simulation.	3.7
Volunteers were helpful to students during the simulation.	3.6
The simulation ran smoothly.	3.3
The logistics (including preparation, transportation, and scheduling) of the simulation were easy to manage.	3.0

### Teachers and Volunteers

While respondents largely agreed that teachers were interested in having the JA program in their classrooms, one respondent point out that *“While teachers love the program, many feel pressure to teach what is required by the state and have a hard time finding time for this program”* (Table 61).

JA Member staff also agreed that it was easy to train teachers (mean=3.3) and volunteers (3.5), although one respondent cited the time limitations for training volunteers as an issue noting, *“It is difficult to give volunteers adequate training in 45 minutes to an hour.”*

Finally, JA Member survey ratings reflect some difficulty in recruiting volunteers for the simulation (n=2.6).

**Table 61**  
**On a Scale of 1 to 5 with 1 Being Strongly Disagree and 5 Being Strongly Agree JA Staff Level of Agreement to Statements Regarding Program Simulation (n=7)**

Statements	Mean Response
<b>Teachers</b> were interested in having this JA program in their classrooms.	3.7
I found it easy to train <b>volunteers</b> for the simulation.	3.5
I found it easy to train <b>teachers</b> for the program.	3.3
It was easy to recruit <b>volunteers</b> for the simulation.	2.6

## Program Quality Overall

As depicted in **Table 62**, JA members found the overall program to be of a very high quality (mean=4.6) with one respondent adding, *“This is a much needed program and one which is very attractive to funders and volunteers.”*

**Table 62**  
**JA Staff Ratings of the Program Materials Overall**  
 (n=7)

Extremely Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Exceptional	Mean
--	--	--	n=3	n=4	4.6

## JA Staff Focus Group Findings

Seven JA staff members from four different JA Member offices participated in focus groups and/or interviews. Their positions within JA varied from part-time assistant to Senior Vice President. None of the JA staff had observed any of the classroom lessons. Respondents who reported observing the simulation (n=3) were not able to provide specific numbers, but the frequency was high with one participant reporting between 20 and 30 times observing/participating in the simulation and the two others reporting hundreds of times.

## Student Reactions

When asked how they perceived students to be responding to the program, respondents reported overwhelmingly positive reactions from students.

- *“Students are reacting very well to the program. Just walking in the door they are excited about being part of it. And what they get here, the teachers have certainly adequately trained them, and they seem to go through the simulation pretty well. So they do enjoy themselves in addition to learning things.”*
- *“Exceptionally positively. I was actually talking to our Capital One lady who coordinated all their volunteers for the time that it was here, and I read through all of the student comment cards and out of, I think almost 1,300 students, I had like two or three that said something like ‘this is boring’ or ‘I didn’t learn anything.’ Everything else has been ‘this is fun,’ ‘I learned a lot,’ ‘this is great,’ ‘I wish I could do it again.’”*
- *“Very positively. I’ve had an opportunity to talk with the teachers who are going to be using it next year as well as people from Junior Achievement. The reaction is all very good.”*
- *“They enjoy it. They get really involved in the process, and I think there’s a lot of frustration that they feel during the day. By the end of the day they’re generally happy to be finished with it, but they’re also proud to be done. I would say the vast majority of them have a good time with it.”*

## Teacher Reactions

As far as the JA staff had observed, teachers were reacting very positively to the program. In addition, some teachers appreciated the program because it fulfilled newly implemented state mandates requiring that economic life skills be taught in high school.

- *“The information that I get from the teachers has also been very positive in terms of the curriculum itself as well as how it prepares the students for the simulation.”*
- *“Very positively. Because it was a pilot I checked with the teachers even though I didn’t get to go visit with them. I did not have anybody calling me to say ‘I don’t understand this,’ or ‘this doesn’t work.’ Everything was very positive when I called them.”*
- *“They have said that the kids have responded very, very positively. And they commented about what it has done to improve their math skills, decision-making skills, analysis skills, which are all things that we’re trying to work on.”*
- *“They really appreciate the program. I don’t want to say that they love it, but there are a lot of them that really do love it. Some of them have other pressures in their classroom.”*
- *“I talked at length with the high school teachers yesterday. They said they thought it was great because of the mandates they’ve got to teach. This program has really made their lives a whole lot easier because they do not have to reinvent the wheel.”*

## Difficulty of Lessons and Concepts

In general, JA staff felt that the *JA Finance Park* concepts were age-appropriate for most participating students, although responses varied according to whether respondents were referring to middle or high school students. For the high school students, the concepts did not seem to be especially challenging. For younger students, issues with credit and balancing the budget arose as well as overarching problems with the math skills necessary to complete the program.

- *“The curriculum is age appropriate for most students. I don’t really run into a lot of problems were it’s either too easy or too hard. It is a little too easy for high school students, but it really is geared more to our 8<sup>th</sup> graders.”*
- *“The high school students so far haven’t had as many challenges with any of the concepts except for possibly some of the stock market stuff. I don’t know how much of that is the concept of the stock market and how much of it is the math with them. Our middle school students have had some problems with calculating percentages. It’s been an issue for the middle school students, and they saw this as a way not only to help them learn it, but to help them see the reasons that they need to learn it.”*
- *“It is going to vary. Some of the students, especially at the junior high level, who are not coming from a math class, get a little bogged down in all of the percentages and rounding. But you are going to have some kids who are going to fly through the material. It is really not a reflection on the program.”*

- *“Explaining that they have to pay back credit with interest. The way we have it set up where they are buying something and have to break it down into smaller payments is just a really big leap that we have to make with some of the kids.”*
- *“Sometimes they get really hung up when they have added everything up and they have gone over budget, or the checkbook register can be difficult for them sometimes. What’s really a mess is when they come through check out and their budget worksheet has a different amount than the checkbook register that has a different amount than what their computer banking balance says.”*

## Effectiveness of Program Materials

JA staff were asked to rate the program materials according to their effectiveness as tools to facilitate student learning. They rated materials on a scale of one to five with five being the highest or most effective. In general, scores indicated that JA staff felt the JA materials effectively promoted student learning (**Table 63**).

**Table 63**  
**JA Staff Ratings of Program Materials**

Program Materials	Number of Respondents	Mean Rating
Occupation Guide (Unit 7)	n=3	4.5
Life Situation Cards (Unit 4)	4	4.5
Lucky/Unlucky Chance Cards (Unit 4)	4	4.5
Career Cluster Cards (Unit 7)	3	4.3
Tax Cards (Unit 2)	5	4.2
Guide for Teachers	4	4.1
Got To Have It Cards (Unit 1)	4	4.0
Credit “Cards” (Unit 1)	5	4.0
What If? Cards (Unit 3)	3	4.0
The Price We Pay Cards (Unit 2)	4	3.3
JA Finance Park Video (Unit 4)	3	3.0

In addition, JA staff were asked to provide explanations for any materials they rated a 3 or below. At that time, some focus group attendees provided explanations for more positive ratings (e.g. 4 or 5) as well. Representative examples of their comments are below.

### Gotta Have it Cards

- *“I really liked it because we have parochial schools that say the kids that are moving quickly get bored. I think these activities are really good to get them active in the classroom.”*

### Credit Cards

One respondent who felt that there was simply not enough information surrounding the credit cards elaborated stating, *“Those I wasn’t as tickled with only because it seems like the other things have had more information, and this was too brief.”*

### What If? Cards

One participant, while finding the content acceptable, recommended a formatting change for the What If? Cards stating, *“The content worked okay, but format-wise I think it would be neater if they were actually cards.”*

### Price We Pay Cards

Two respondents felt that the Price We Pay cards could be improved.

- *“While they were good for examples, I felt like we should have something that was not quite so easy. I think it should be something that’s a little bit harder for them, more challenging.”*
- *“I think that they can come up with some examples that aren’t so obscure.”*

### JA Finance Park Video

A perception of the JA Finance Park video as a marketing tool prevailed among respondents. While their opinions of it varied, they were lackluster on the whole.

- *“I think it’s not clear enough about what the students are going to be actually doing. It seems to be more of a marketing piece.”*
- *“The video is a good video, and it is a good marketing piece. Is that all we’re looking at it for?”*
- *“I know it’s supposed to be versatile to use in the classroom and as a selling tool for teachers and then also to sponsors, but I feel like it’s a hard tool for me to take in to a teacher, a board meeting. Actually the board meeting does better than a classroom of 9<sup>th</sup> graders. We feel that the Finance Park video is a little corny to our older students.”*

Another participant was concerned with the video’s availability, stating, *“We would like them available to purchase online. I know that they’re on the website, but not all the teachers have access to that. And it’s not very effective for us to be making copies of it at our site.”*

### Presentation of Program Materials

When asked to what extent the program materials presented the curriculum content in an effective and interesting way, participants responded with positive remarks.

- *“I think that they definitely do present the materials in an interesting way by giving the students plenty of practice—especially the new version’s hands-on materials.”*
- *“All my teachers so far have said very well. I mean, it is either from very to extremely. I haven’t had anybody even say good. So if that’s what they say, I’m going for it.”*

## Value of Lessons

In responding to what extent the lessons contained valuable information for students, participants reported that they saw the value of the lessons in their relevance and applicability to real life.

- *“I think the curriculum is geared very well towards presenting real world situations that they are going to have to deal with, whether it be in terms of credit, saving, investing, and of course, especially budgeting. I think it does give a very good overview of all those concepts.”*
- *“I think it prepares them, especially the seniors, for a lot of the kinds of decision-making that they are going to have to do very, very shortly in life. Most of these kids are going to college or off to work in a very, very short period of time, and they are going to have to start doing this exact same kind of thing. It gives them a little bit better understanding of the juggling act that they are going to have to go through. I think for the middle school kids, it’s giving them a little bit better appreciation of what their parents go through and some of those realities of life.”*

## Relevance to Students

The majority of respondents felt like the materials were exceptionally relevant to students’ lives. One participant did note, however, that middle students could benefit from materials that included scenarios directed more toward their age range.

- *“I think that when you combined the workbook driven materials where it asks students to put themselves in other people’s shoes, but it gives them the opportunity to make certain decisions that are based on their own life, and couple that with the simulation, I think the curriculum does a very good job of presenting the material in a way that is relevant to students.”*
- *“We actually had a school come the first week, and it was an alternative high school. A lot of those kids are living on their own, are already earning a salary, paying bills. One of the students actually went and talked to the teacher, and he was like, ‘this is the best thing that’s ever happened to me’ because he was just paying the bills, and he didn’t realize how it all fit together. This is somebody who has been, I think, disowned by his parents basically, and so he is living on his own and he’s in high school. He found it to be terribly valuable for him.”*
- *“They’re not trying to tell the kids that everybody lives the exact same life and has to make the exact same decisions, and that’s the real key to all of this is this is real life. When we think about it, nobody ever taught most of us how to figure out a budget. How did you figure it out? You made a lot of mistakes. And I know that was the reason the State Board of Education in our state felt that it was so important that they put those 12 personal finance mandates in there, was because they felt that students were leaving school and this was an area where they were terribly uneducated. I mean, all you have to do is look at the bankruptcy rate, the consumer debt and that type of thing.”*

## Program Quality in Comparison with Other JA Programs

When asked to compare the quality of JA Finance Park with other JA programs, respondents expressed the view that the program compared favorably. Overall, they noted the same quality and attention to detail characteristic in *JA Finance Park* as other JA programs.

- *“I think it compares very well, actually. I think there was a lot of thought put into creating this curriculum that goes into the other ones. It is really thorough. It compares favorably.”*
- *“When I first saw generation one, the trailer one, I wasn’t expecting much because it’s in a tractor trailer, but I was so impressed with the graphics and the way it was set up. When we heard about this one we weren’t really sure what it was going to look like either because this is the first time it had been used. And when they set it up I was very, very impressed with the attention to detail and how much they did. That’s part of what the kids will notice.”*
- *“They have done a lot to make sure that the materials are on the mark, they’re current. I think the program has been very, very well thought out as far as how they can integrate it and trying to find how it fits within the schools.”*

## Value of the Simulation

Overall, JA staff agreed that the simulation worked with the classroom segment of the program to solidify the concepts themselves and their practicality. Having to engage with the concepts in a hands-on situation both reinforced the concepts and also highlighted the idea that these skills are applicable to real life.

- *“I think the simulation is what really drives the concept home in terms of giving the students an opportunity to make decisions for themselves and make some mistakes on their way to creating a budget.”*
- *“I think not only does it give it some excitement just because they get to do something with what they’re learning, but I think it is very similar to the reason that we have volunteers go into the classroom—because even though they know this stuff and they did these activities in school, until they are responsible for doing it for themselves, it doesn’t click as well as it could.”*
- *“The worksheets and all of the preparation that you go through is wonderful, but you’ve got to have a way to pull it all together otherwise the kids would not see the relationship between the content and that real life application. And the whole point is that we want them to understand that, yes, this is real life.”*

## Greatest Successes

Respondents had many positive statements regarding what they perceived to be the program’s successes including its relevance to real life and the possibility for student academic success.

- *“I think the greatest success is the preparation the students have for the simulation and how that prepares them for things they are going to be dealing with themselves in the real world in a few years.”*
- *“I had 25 available days during the month before the big state testing that everybody freaks out about. We filled 21 of those days with basically one month’s worth of marketing. To me that shows how successful this program is. It shows there’s a huge demand for it.”*
- *“There was a girl here, a junior high student, who at the end of the day said I’ve got to call my mother. Apparently she had had this very huge argument with her mother about something she wanted. I think it was an iPod. And her mother said I’m sorry, we just don’t have the money for it. And I mean, it was a knock down, drag out argument, and she said she had to call her mother to apologize because now she understood why her mother said they didn’t have enough money for it. That type of situation then and there tells you this program is working.”*
- *“I think that it takes all kids and allows them to be successful. It’s a great leveler. It takes children of all levels and gives them an equal starting point and an equal ability to complete what they’re doing and the same possibility of getting a perfect grade. They may not be naturally as good in math as another student, and they can come out with the same grade at the end of the day as somebody else and they feel really good about that. They get to go back to school, show that they have done just as well as somebody else. Their teachers are impressed with them; their parents get to see what they’ve done. They get a lot of positive feedback from everybody.”*

## **Greatest Challenges**

In describing the program’s greatest challenges, JA staff articulated a variety of responses including space, unclear worksheets, meeting demand for the program, finding volunteers, and working with students on grade level concepts when asked what they considered to be this program’s greatest challenges.

- *“Finding the space to set this up is a huge challenge.”*
- *“Recruiting volunteers is a bit of a challenge the higher up the grade level you go. Middle schools are still okay. High schools are a little bit tougher.”*
- *“There are a couple of the worksheets that we do during the course of the day that are problematic. And we know that they are problematic, and so we’ve got to find a way to make them a little clearer. I view that as an easy fix kind of challenge.”*
- *“I think a big challenge that we’re going to have is being able to meet the demand. The word is already getting out, and people are already saying we want this next year. That’s going to be a huge challenge for Junior Achievement to be able to provide what the schools want.”*
- *“Having enough volunteers. Or any time in the classroom. And students that are not working at or near grade level. If they come in and they don’t know how to do percents it is going to be difficult.”*

## Obstacles

When asked if they had encountered any obstacles in implementing *JA Finance Park*, a few JA staff related isolated situations that they had overcome such as not having enough volunteers or trying to figure out how to implement the program into one school's curriculum. As relates to the program overall, however, there were few large obstacles, and these were not seen as insurmountable.

- *“The timing. The amount of time it takes to teach the curriculum is certainly one of the stumbling blocks that we do bump into. You know, it is a big commitment for a teacher to do that in a classroom, especially this environment where there are so many other things that they are required to get into the classroom.”*
- *“One of the issues is travel time and there are people from all across the state that would love to come here, but they can't get here in enough time.”*
- *“Raising money is always an issue and the student fees too. We charge \$15 a student, and we do give scholarships and work with some schools for that, but you know, for some schools even coming up with the money for the buses to get here is a challenge.”*

## Volunteer Findings

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During student's visits to the Finance Park, volunteers were asked to assist students assigned to various small businesses designed to simulate specific work environments. Volunteers came from a variety of regions in the country and represented an array of business, industry, and other backgrounds. Volunteers were surveyed following each simulation regarding their experience as a volunteer for *JA Finance Park*.

**Table 64** displays volunteer survey response rates by JA Member location. The largest percentage of volunteers were recruited by JA of Washington (38 percent) followed by JA of Southeast Texas at (29 percent). The participation from all regions ranged from 16 percent to 38 percent with a total of 77 volunteers.

**Table 64**  
**Volunteer JA Member Regional Status**  
(n=77)

JA Member	Number of Regional JA Members	Percentage of Regional JA Members
JA of Northern Indiana	n=12	16%
JA of Washington	29	38
JA of the Mississippi Valley	14	18
JA of Southeast Texas	22	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>

Volunteers were asked to indicate their company/organization affiliation. Companies were divided into ten target categories that addressed a wide-variety of professions. Over one-third of all volunteers were from schools or academic organizations (39

percent) with accounting/banking/business following a distant second (9 percent). The least represented categories (1 percent for each) were in the areas of construction/building, attorney/law office, and health.

**Table 65  
Company Category Status  
(n=77)**

Company Category	Number of JA Volunteers	Percentage of JA Volunteers
School/Academic	n=30	39%
Community Organization	4	5
Accounting/Banking/Business	7	9
Government/Law Enforcement	5	6
Construction/Building	1	1
Homemaker/Parent/Domestic	4	5
Retail/Service	4	5
Attorney/Law Office	1	1
Health	1	1
Other/Undetermined	20	26

Volunteers were asked how frequently they had volunteered for JA prior to the current *JA Finance Park* study. Less than half of the volunteers (46 percent) indicated that this was their first time participating in JA. Fourteen percent of volunteers stated that they had participated once before and 9 percent of volunteers indicated that they had participated 11 or more times prior to the current program session (**Table 66**).

**Table 66:  
Prior Experience Volunteering for JA  
(n=77)**

JA Prior Volunteer Status	Number of Volunteers at Level of Prior Volunteering	Percentage of Volunteers at Level of Prior Volunteering
This is my first time participating in JA	n=35	46%
1 time	11	14
2 times	8	10
3 times	10	13
4 times	--	--
5-7 times	4	5
8-10 times	2	3
11+ times	7	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>

Volunteers were also asked if they had ever volunteered, specifically, for *JA Finance Park* before. Three-fourths of volunteers (75 percent) reported that they had volunteered before while one-fourth (25 percent) indicated that they had not volunteered for *JA Finance Park* before.

**Table 67**  
**Prior Experience Volunteering for JA Finance Park**  
**(n=76)**

Statement	Yes Response	No Response
Have you ever volunteered for JA Finance Park before?	n=57	n=19
	75%	25%

As depicted in **Table 68**, the ethnic breakdown of the volunteer population revealed that the majority of participants (82 percent) were Caucasian/White, while 8 percent were African American/Black. Ethnicities representing the remaining 10 percent of the volunteers included Asian, Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American/Alaskan Native.

**Table 68**  
**Ethnic Distribution**  
**(n=77)**

Ethnicity	Number of Regional JA Members	Percentage of Regional JA Members
African American/Black	n=6	8%
Asian	1	1
Pacific Islander	1	1
Caucasian/White	63	82
Hispanic/Latino	4	5
Native American/Alaskan Native	2	3
Other	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>

To gauge how prepared volunteers were for the simulation, respondents were asked to rate statements about their preparedness on a one to four scale ranging from “*strongly disagree*” to “*strongly agree*.” The mean responses for all four items (see **Table 69** on the following page) indicate that respondents agreed with statements regarding the registration process, training, JA staff support, and materials (mean range = 3.6 to 3.7).

**Table 69**  
**On a Scale from 1 to 4 with 1 Being Strongly Disagree and 4 Being Strongly Agree**  
**JA Staff Level of Agreement with Statements Addressing the**  
**Volunteers and Teachers**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean Responses</b>
The volunteer registration process was easy.	n=74
	3.7
I was properly trained for this program.	n=75
	3.6
I was provided adequate JA staff support during the simulation.	n=74
	3.7
I was provided with proper materials to support the students in completing the simulation.	n=73
	3.6

The volunteers were also asked about their impressions on a variety of aspects related to the simulation. Volunteers were asked to rate each on a one to five scale ranging from “*extremely unsatisfactory*” to “*exceptional*.” As shown in **Table 70**, the range of mean responses indicate that respondents rated all statements related to the simulation as “good” (mean range = 4.1 to 4.5).

**Table 70**  
**On a Scale from 1 to 5 with 1 Being Extremely Unsatisfactory and 5 Being Exceptional**  
**Volunteers’ Satisfaction with Aspects of the Simulation**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean Responses</b>
Overall quality of the simulation	n=74
	4.5
Facility layout and design.	n=77
	4.5
Space allowed for the simulation	n=77
	4.3
Usefulness of the volunteer and student materials	n=77
	4.3
Flow of the simulation	n=77
	4.3
Execution of the simulation	n=77
	4.3
Execution of the simulation	n=77
	4.3
Relationship of the simulation to the real world	n=77
	4.2
Time allowed for the simulation	n=77
	4.1

With regard to the students who attended the simulation, the volunteers were invited to rate their impression of the students' comfort level with the simulation content and their level of engagement during the simulation on a one to five scale, or from "extremely unsatisfactory" to "exceptional." The mean ratings indicate that respondents felt that students' comfort with the simulation content and engagement in the simulation was "good" (means= 4.0 and 4.3).

**Table 71**  
**On a Scale from 1 to 5 with 1 Being Extremely Unsatisfactory and 5 Being Exceptional**  
**Volunteers' Perceptions of Student Comfort Level and Engagement**

Statement	Mean Responses
Students' comfort level with the simulation content	n=76
	4.0
Student's level of engagement	n=77
	4.3

When asked to rate various personal accomplishments on a one to four scale, volunteers agreed with all statements, indicating that they had an enjoyable, meaningful experience (mean range=3.3-3.4) (Table 72).

**Table 72**  
**On a Scale from 1 to 4 with 1 Being Strongly Disagree and 4 Being Strongly Agree**  
**Volunteers' Personal Accomplishments**

Statement	Mean Responses
I felt good about myself.	n=76
	3.4
I made a difference in the lives of young people.	n=76
	3.4
My connection to young people improved.	n=75
	3.3
I was able to interact directly with students for most of the time.	n=77
	3.3
My participation was vital to the success of the simulation.	n=75
	3.3

The volunteers were provided an opportunity to report on what they liked the most and the least about the *JA Finance Park* simulation. When asked what they like most, volunteers frequently mentioned that they enjoyed the opportunity for students to have "a real world true life experience", "helping the students," "kids learning budgeting," and, "the well organized set up" provided by the simulation. A representative list of volunteer responses is below.

### What Volunteers Liked Most

- *“Gives the kids some insight into the real world.”*
- *“Helping the students make life choices once their budget became tight. Interacting and getting to know the students.”*
- *“I liked the budgeting. I never got that when I went to Auburn School District.”*
- *“JA Finance Park allowed students a glimpse to the realities of managing finances.”*
- *“Real-life simulation organization – Very well thought out activity. The kids were engaged the entire time.”*
- *“Very organized, well run-great. They had answer sheets ready for volunteers. It made it easy to help the students without being rushed.”*
- *“Seeing how kids would know what to with their future.”*

Negative comments about the simulation were reflective of the demographic target of the simulation, available time and realism of the simulation. Some volunteers indicated that the simulation was geared for a particular level of student, which made the simulation too easy for some students and yet, too difficult for others. Others felt the simulation could be more realistic. Below is a representative list of volunteers' responses.

### What Volunteers Liked Least

- *“Each school was at a different level and the program is designed for only one level of student.”*
- *“I wish it was a little more realistic. I don't really see the point of having the stations when they are basically small classrooms.”*
- *“Not enough time for students.”*
- *“Some things not realistic-prices need gas included.”*
- *“These kids are too smart! They didn't need me!”*
- *“Too difficult for younger students.”*

Volunteers were asked if they would volunteer for JA again and if they would recommend volunteering for *JA Finance Park* to their friends and co-workers. Volunteers were also invited to explain their answers. Almost all of the volunteers (93 percent) indicated that they would participate in JA again and all volunteers (100 percent) indicated that they would recommend volunteering for *JA Finance Park* to their friends or co-workers (**Table 73** on the following page). Volunteers who disagreed indicated that they would be unable to participate in the future due to other time commitments with work or school and also due to the distance they would need to travel to the Finance Park simulation site. However, these individuals also reported that they enjoyed helping or would do so if their child was involved.

**Table 73**  
**Volunteer Willingness to Volunteer Again for JA and Recommend JA Finance Park to Friends or Co-workers**

Statement	Yes Response	No Response
Would you volunteer for Junior Achievement again?	n=68	n=68
	93%	7%
I would recommend volunteering for JA Finance Park to my friends or co-workers.	n=71	n=71
	100%	0%

Finally, volunteers were asked if they had any other comments regarding the *JA Finance Park* simulation, many of whom used the opportunity to share positive comments about their experience. Volunteers also shared suggestions to enhance the program and recommendations to provide students with additional tools or knowledge. Volunteers suggested that alternate transportation and gas prices be included in the simulation, that students receive a credit/debit card to use during the simulation, that students are provided additional information about rounding to the nearest dollar, and that JA could use a sponsor for clothing to be used during the simulation. Many volunteers shared that they wished the program had been around when they were attending school. Below is a representative sample of additional comments and suggestions from the volunteers.

**Additional Comments**

- *“Fun day, maybe split the boys and girls more evenly. I had all boys in my group. I would have liked to see more diversity. I also would have liked to see the students have transportation options besides a car. Allow them to see money and gas saving choices.”*
- *“I really enjoyed the simulation and interaction with the students. I’m a firm believer in educating our students with finances, which is much needed in today’s society.”*
- *“I wish Finance Park was around when I was in school.”*
- *“It’s a wonderful program! I enjoy volunteering more each time! I look forward to volunteering in the future!”*
- *“Make sure students know how to properly round to the nearest dollar. The majority in my group rounded up every time.”*
- *“Post volunteers near computers to streamline time.”*
- *“The kids would enjoy a swipe-able card (credit/debit card).”*
- *“This needs to be done in every school, especially for kids going off to college.”*

## IV. Summary and Recommendations

### Summary

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As the evaluation results clearly demonstrate, *JA Finance Park* successfully contributed to both students' knowledge and positive student attitudes. An analysis of the pre- to post-survey student responses indicated statistically significant increases in students' content knowledge, both among those with previous JA experience and those participating in JA for the first time. Further analysis of student responses highlighted an increase in students' confidence in their ability to be successful and confidence in monetary decisions. Further, students also reported that, following the program, they knew more about how to develop a personal budget.

Adult stakeholders reported a positive experience with the program in terms of the materials, curriculum, and the level to which they felt the students benefited from the program. Specifically, adult stakeholders were impressed by the level to which the program increased students' awareness of the financial responsibilities of real life. In some cases, teachers reported observing in students a dawning recognition of the necessities of financial management in their parents' lives.

JA staff indicated that they felt the program fulfilled a deep educational need for students. Almost all teachers indicated that they would participate in *JA Finance Park* again. Further, most teachers reported that they would recommend *JA Finance Park* to other teachers. Volunteers indicated that they had an enjoyable, meaningful experience at Finance Park while helping students develop insight into the real world and gain experience in the practical skills necessary for financial stability and success. Many volunteers had volunteered previously and all of the volunteers reported that they would recommend volunteering for *JA Finance Park* to their friends and co-workers. In light of these responses to the program, it is our recommendation that JA continue to offer *JA Finance Park* as it provides a much needed introduction to the economics of real life.

### Recommendations

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In addition to the many positive findings produced by the evaluation, program stakeholders suggested recommendations for program improvement. The simulation was viewed as a success by everyone involved due to its potential for high levels of student learning and engagement. Providing details to students for the particulars of what to expect at Finance Park could be beneficial in allaying any student anxiety and streamlining the process, thereby maximizing student engagement and learning. This could potentially be accomplished through a revamping of the Finance Park DVD.

Much of what was unappealing to students about *JA Finance Park* involved the large amounts of paperwork and worksheets students were required to complete. The

program clearly lends itself to games, group involvement, and hands-on activities. Through heightening these types of activities students could be more deeply engaged. In addition, diversifying and expanding the types of activities offered in the program could increase the level to which differentiated learning styles are utilized, thus reaching more students.

While time constraints and issues are often unavoidable with the demands of state testing and classroom standards, not to mention unforeseen circumstances, many teachers felt they could have benefitted from a bulleted list of necessary points to cover in the *JA Finance Park* curriculum. The value of the curriculum is clear, and ideally, teachers would be able complete all lessons and activities. When this is not possible, however, an abbreviated list of vital concepts and activities could help alleviate the pressure on teachers and provide a more meaningful learning experience for students by allowing them to engage fully with the material at hand as opposed to rushing through it.

In observing the simulation, another area for potential improvement arose. Although the extent to which students engaged in discussion with JA hosts varied across different Finance Park sites, discussion of careers and the activities did not seem to be built into the simulation. Tapping into the career and life experience of JA staff and volunteers as well as debriefing the material could provide additional depth to the experience for students.

## V. Appendices

- Appendix A: Student Surveys
- Appendix B: Volunteer Post-program Survey
- Appendix C: Teacher Post-program Survey
- Appendix D: JA Member Staff Post-program Survey
- Appendix E: Moderator's Guide for Students
- Appendix F: Moderator's Guide for Teachers
- Appendix G: Moderator's Guide for JA Member Staff
- Appendix H: Site Observation Guide for *JA Finance Park* Simulation

## Appendix A: Student Surveys

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# JA Finance Park™ Student Pre-Test

To help JA improve this program, please take a few minutes to answer the questions on this survey.  
Thanks for your help!

## Student Information

1. What are the first three letters of your **last** name?

--	--	--

2. When were you born?

						1	9		
Month			Day			Year			

3. Are you (**please check only one**): <sub>1</sub> Female <sub>2</sub> Male

4. What grade are you in? (**Please check only one**) <sub>1</sub> 6<sup>th</sup> <sub>2</sub> 7<sup>th</sup> <sub>3</sub> 8<sup>th</sup> <sub>4</sub> Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is your ethnic background? (**Please check all that apply**)

- White/Caucasian  Latino/Hispanic  Black/African American  
 Asian  Pacific Islander  American Indian/Alaskan Native  
 Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you ever participated in a Junior Achievement program besides *JA Finance Park*?

- <sub>1</sub> Yes (Continue with Q7) <sub>2</sub> No (Continue with Q8)

7. In which grade(s), or year(s) in school, did you participate in a Junior Achievement program?  
(**Please check all that apply**)

- First grade  Fifth grade  
 Second grade  Sixth grade  
 Third grade  Seventh grade  
 Fourth grade  Eighth grade  
 I did not participate in JA before this year

## Pre-Test Questions

Carefully read the following questions and mark the correct answer.

8. Unless a credit card is paid completely each month, the borrower will be charged interest.

- <sub>1</sub> True  
<sub>2</sub> False

9. Most people 65 and older can receive health coverage through a program called Medicare.

- <sub>1</sub> True  
<sub>2</sub> False

(Please continue on the next page)

10. Match the terms with the appropriate definition:

\_\_\_\_\_ Abilities  
\_\_\_\_\_ Interests

\_\_\_\_\_ Work Preferences  
\_\_\_\_\_ Values

- a. The ideals that are important to you.
- b. The feelings you have about the kinds of activities you do on the job and the conditions under which you work.
- c. The things you do well.
- d. The things you enjoy and like doing.

11. When you use a credit card, you

- <sub>1</sub> buy now, pay later.
- <sub>2</sub> buy now, pay now.
- <sub>3</sub> buy now, pay never.
- <sub>4</sub> buy now, pay forever.

12. Financial trust extended to a person by a lender is called

- <sub>1</sub> budget.
- <sub>2</sub> interest.
- <sub>3</sub> credit.
- <sub>4</sub> stock.

13. The three variables that affect saving money are

- <sub>1</sub> amount, interest, and credit.
- <sub>2</sub> amount, interest, and time.
- <sub>3</sub> amount, stocks, and time.
- <sub>4</sub> none of the above.

14. A disadvantage of credit is

- <sub>1</sub> it allows you to track expenditures.
- <sub>2</sub> it encourages impulse spending.
- <sub>3</sub> it allows you to establish credit.
- <sub>4</sub> it allows you to buy now and pay later.

15. What is Social Security?

- <sub>1</sub> A private insurance system used by only the rich.
- <sub>2</sub> A social insurance system.
- <sub>3</sub> The amount of money someone has.
- <sub>4</sub> None of the above.

16. The total amount of monthly income remaining, after all deductions have been taken out, is known as

- <sub>1</sub> gross annual income.
- <sub>2</sub> gross monthly income.
- <sub>3</sub> net annual income.
- <sub>4</sub> net monthly income.

17. A record of spending or of probable expenditures and income for a given period of time is called

- <sub>1</sub> a budget.
- <sub>2</sub> interest.
- <sub>3</sub> credit.
- <sub>4</sub> investments.

**(Please continue on the next page)**

**Market Report: Use the market report below to answer questions 18 and 19.**

HIGH	LOW	STOCK	SALES (100's)	CLOSE	NET
51	34	AAPL	1589	50	3
36	14	DIS	689	15	-2
88	44	RJF	123568	78	1
67	38	HD	86245	43	NC

18. Which stock had the highest closing price?

- <sub>1</sub> AAPL
- <sub>2</sub> DIS
- <sub>3</sub> RJF
- <sub>4</sub> HD

19. Which stock had the largest increase in value from the previous day?

- <sub>1</sub> AAPL
- <sub>2</sub> DIS
- <sub>3</sub> RJF
- <sub>4</sub> HD

**Read the profile below to answer questions 20 through 22.**

Gina is a single woman who lives by herself and is a district manager for a chain of home improvement stores. She earns an annual salary of \$55,000. However, she pays \$1,040 a month for federal income taxes, \$475 a month for Social Security, and \$200 a month for Medicare.

Gina has several fixed expenses. She drives a 2003 vehicle and her payment is \$466 per month. She also pays \$117 per month for car insurance. Gina currently rents an apartment for \$985 per month. Her health insurance is \$95 per month, and she puts \$200 a month into her savings account.

Gina also has several regular variable expenses. One of these is her food bill, which normally runs about \$249 a month. She also spends about \$145 a month on gasoline for her car. Approximately \$260 per month is spent on entertainment.

20. What is Gina's gross annual income?

- <sub>1</sub> \$23,000
- <sub>2</sub> \$55,000
- <sub>3</sub> \$23,300
- <sub>4</sub> \$36,500

21. What is Gina's net monthly income?

- <sub>1</sub> \$2,788.33
- <sub>2</sub> \$2,868.33
- <sub>3</sub> \$2,878.33
- <sub>4</sub> \$2,768.33

22. After Gina has paid her fixed expenses, how much money does she have left over for monthly variable and other expenses?

- <sub>1</sub> \$654
- <sub>2</sub> \$954
- <sub>3</sub> \$1,654.33
- <sub>4</sub> \$1005.33

**Thank You!!!**

# JA Finance Park™ Student Post-Test

To help JA improve this program, please take a few minutes to answer the questions on this survey.  
Thanks for your help!

## Student Information

1. What are the first three letters of your **last** name?

--	--	--

2. When were you born?

						1	9		
Month			Day			Year			

3. Are you (**please check only one**): <sub>1</sub> Female <sub>2</sub> Male

4. What grade are you in? (**Please check only one**) <sub>1</sub> 6<sup>th</sup> <sub>2</sub> 7<sup>th</sup> <sub>3</sub> 8<sup>th</sup> <sub>4</sub> Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is your ethnic background? (**Please check all that apply**)

- White/Caucasian  Latino/Hispanic  Black/African American  
 Asian  Pacific Islander  American Indian/Alaskan Native  
 Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you ever participated in a Junior Achievement program besides *JA Finance Park*?

- <sub>1</sub> Yes (Continue with Q7) <sub>2</sub> No (Continue with Q8)

7. In which grade(s), or year(s) in school, did you participate in a Junior Achievement program?  
(**Please check all that apply**)

- First grade  Fifth grade  
 Second grade  Sixth grade  
 Third grade  Seventh grade  
 Fourth grade  Eighth grade  
 I did not participate in JA before this year

## Post-Test Questions

Carefully read the following questions and mark the correct answer.

8. Unless a credit card is paid completely each month, the borrower will be charged interest.

- <sub>1</sub> True  
<sub>2</sub> False

9. Most people 65 and older can receive health coverage through a program called Medicare.

- <sub>1</sub> True  
<sub>2</sub> False

(Please continue on the next page)

10. Match the terms with the appropriate definition:

\_\_\_\_\_ Abilities  
\_\_\_\_\_ Interests

\_\_\_\_\_ Work Preferences  
\_\_\_\_\_ Values

- a. The ideals that are important to you.
- b. The feelings you have about the kinds of activities you do on the job and the conditions under which you work.
- c. The things you do well.
- d. The things you enjoy and like doing.

11. When you use a credit card, you

- <sub>1</sub> buy now, pay later.
- <sub>2</sub> buy now, pay now.
- <sub>3</sub> buy now, pay never.
- <sub>4</sub> buy now, pay forever.

12. Financial trust extended to a person by a lender is called

- <sub>1</sub> budget.
- <sub>2</sub> interest.
- <sub>3</sub> credit.
- <sub>4</sub> stock.

13. The three variables that affect saving money are

- <sub>1</sub> amount, interest, and credit.
- <sub>2</sub> amount, interest, and time.
- <sub>3</sub> amount, stocks, and time.
- <sub>4</sub> none of the above.

14. A disadvantage of credit is

- <sub>1</sub> it allows you to track expenditures.
- <sub>2</sub> it encourages impulse spending.
- <sub>3</sub> it allows you to establish credit.
- <sub>4</sub> it allows you to buy now and pay later.

15. What is Social Security?

- <sub>1</sub> A private insurance system used by only the rich.
- <sub>2</sub> A social insurance system.
- <sub>3</sub> The amount of money someone has.
- <sub>4</sub> None of the above.

16. The total amount of monthly income remaining, after all deductions have been taken out, is known as

- <sub>1</sub> gross annual income.
- <sub>2</sub> gross monthly income.
- <sub>3</sub> net annual income.
- <sub>4</sub> net monthly income.

17. A record of spending or of probable expenditures and income for a given period of time is called

- <sub>1</sub> a budget.
- <sub>2</sub> interest.
- <sub>3</sub> credit.
- <sub>4</sub> investments.

**(Please continue on the next page)**

**Market Report: Use the market report below to answer questions 18 and 19.**

HIGH	LOW	STOCK	SALES (100's)	CLOSE	NET
51	34	AAPL	1589	50	3
36	14	DIS	689	15	-2
88	44	RJF	123568	78	1
67	38	HD	86245	43	NC

18. Which stock had the highest closing price?

- <sub>1</sub> AAPL
- <sub>2</sub> DIS
- <sub>3</sub> RJF
- <sub>4</sub> HD

19. Which stock had the largest increase in value from the previous day?

- <sub>1</sub> AAPL
- <sub>2</sub> DIS
- <sub>3</sub> RJF
- <sub>4</sub> HD

**Read the profile below to answer questions 20 through 22.**

Gina is a single woman who lives by herself and is a district manager for a chain of home improvement stores. She earns an annual salary of \$55,000. However, she pays \$1,040 a month for federal income taxes, \$475 a month for Social Security, and \$200 a month for Medicare.

Gina has several fixed expenses. She drives a 2003 vehicle and her payment is \$466 per month. She also pays \$117 per month for car insurance. Gina currently rents an apartment for \$985 per month. Her health insurance is \$95 per month, and she puts \$200 a month into her savings account.

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22. After Gina has paid her fixed expenses, how much money does she have left over for monthly variable and other expenses?

- <sub>1</sub> \$654
- <sub>2</sub> \$954
- <sub>3</sub> \$1,654.33
- <sub>4</sub> \$1005.33

**(Please continue on the next page)**

## Student Attitude Questionnaire

	No change 1	A little more 2	A lot more 3
<b>Since you started JA Finance Park, how much <u>more</u> are you...</b>			
23. Confident in your ability to graduate from high school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Confident about your ability to be successful in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Willing to work hard to succeed in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Interested in personal finance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. Confident that you can effectively manage your personal finances.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. Aware of your career options.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. Confident about making decisions that deal with money.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	No change 1	A little more 2	A lot more 3
<b>Since you started JA Finance Park, how much <u>more</u> do you...</b>			
30. Know how to succeed in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. Believe education is important in getting a good job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. Understand the services provided by financial institutions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. Understand how to develop a personal budget.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34. Know how to avoid going into debt.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. Know what steps to take to get a job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36. Believe the way you manage money will affect your future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. Try to complete all your school work, even if it is difficult.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. Handle new problems well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Thank You!!!**

# JA Finance Park™

## Student Post-program Survey

To help JA improve this program, please take a few minutes to answer the questions on this survey.  
Thanks for your help!

### Information about You and Your School

1. What is the name of your school? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What grade are you in? (**Please check only one**)  1 6<sup>th</sup>  2 7<sup>th</sup>  3 8<sup>th</sup>  4 Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. Your age: \_\_\_\_\_ years
4. Are you a (**please check only one**):  1 Female  2 Male
5. What is your ethnic background? (**Please check all that apply**)  
 White/Caucasian  Latino/Hispanic  Black/African American  
 Asian  Pacific Islander  American Indian/Alaskan Native  
 Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### JA Finance Park Classroom Lessons

6. Overall, what did you think about the amount of time your class spent on each lesson?  
 1 Too short  2 Just right  3 Too long
7. Overall, what did you think about the information taught in *JA Finance Park*?  
 1 Too easy  2 Just right  3 Too hard
8. Overall, are the things you learned in class useful in your everyday life?  
 1 Not useful  2 Somewhat useful  3 Very useful
9. What did you like **MOST** about the classroom lessons? (**Please check only one**)  
 1 Student Workbook activities  2 Class activities/games  3 Class discussions  
 4 Working in small groups  5 Other (Please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
10. What did you like **LEAST** about the classroom lessons? (**Please check only one**)  
 1 Student Workbook activities  2 Class activities/games  3 Class discussions  
 4 Working in small groups  5 Other (Please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
11. If there was one thing you could change about the *JA Finance Park* classroom lessons, what would it be?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Please continue on the next page)

**JA Finance Park Site Visit**

12. How well did the classroom lessons prepare you for the Finance Park site visit?

- <sub>1</sub> Not at all      <sub>2</sub> Pretty well      <sub>3</sub> Great

13. What did you think about the amount of time your class spent at the Finance Park site visit?

- <sub>1</sub> Too short      <sub>2</sub> Just right      <sub>3</sub> Too long

14. What did you think about the activities you did at the Finance Park site visit?

- <sub>1</sub> Too easy      <sub>2</sub> Just right      <sub>3</sub> Too hard

15. How would you grade the technology (i.e. computers, calculators, etc.) used during the Finance Park site visit?

- <sub>1</sub> A      <sub>2</sub> B      <sub>3</sub> C      <sub>4</sub> D      <sub>5</sub> F

16. How would you grade the rooms and setting of the Finance Park site visit?

- <sub>1</sub> A      <sub>2</sub> B      <sub>3</sub> C      <sub>4</sub> D      <sub>5</sub> F

17. How would you grade the helpfulness of the adults at the Finance Park site visit?

- <sub>1</sub> A      <sub>2</sub> B      <sub>3</sub> C      <sub>4</sub> D      <sub>5</sub> F

18. Overall, how would you grade the Finance Park site visit?

- <sub>1</sub> A      <sub>2</sub> B      <sub>3</sub> C      <sub>4</sub> D      <sub>5</sub> F

19. What did you like **MOST** about the site visit?

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20. What did you like **LEAST** about the site visit?

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21. If there were one thing you could change about the Finance Park site visit, what would it be?

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**Overall Experience**

22. Overall, what did you think about this program?

- <sub>1</sub> Boring      <sub>2</sub> Okay      <sub>3</sub> Fun

23. Would you recommend this program to a friend?    <sub>1</sub> Yes      <sub>2</sub> No

24b. If **no**, why not?

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24. On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being totally unhappy and 10 being very happy, how happy were you with the entire *JA Finance Park* program? \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you!**

Appendix B: JA Staff Post-Program Survey

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# JA Finance Park™

## JA Member Staff Post-Program Survey

This is a survey for JA Member staff who participated in *JA Finance Park*. Your responses are important for the evaluation of the program. Thank you for your help!

How many years have you worked for JA (including this year)? \_\_\_\_\_

How many years have you worked with *JA Finance Park* (including this year)? \_\_\_\_\_

What grade level(s) received this program in your Area? *(Please check all that apply)*

- 6<sup>th</sup>   
  7<sup>th</sup>   
  8<sup>th</sup>   
  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Program Materials

Please rate your level of agreement with each statement as it relates to the classroom materials for <i>JA Finance Park</i> .	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
The materials were attractive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The materials were of good quality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The materials appealed to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the space below to provide an explanation for your response. <i>(Optional)</i>				
_____				
_____				
_____				

Using the following five-point scale, please rate the quality of the *JA Finance Park* materials overall.

- Extremely Unsatisfactory   
  Unsatisfactory   
  Satisfactory   
  Good   
  Exceptional

### Program Curriculum

Please rate your level of agreement with each statement below as it relates to the <i>JA Finance Park</i> classroom curriculum.	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
The curriculum met the standards required by the state, district, and school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The curriculum was age-appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the space below to provide an explanation for your response. <i>(Optional)</i>				
_____				
_____				
_____				

## Program Simulation

Have you observed a simulation?  Yes (If yes, continue below)  No (If no, continue to next section)

Please rate your level of agreement with each statement below as it relates to the <i>JA Finance Park</i> simulation.	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
The simulation was well aligned with the in-class curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The simulation added value to the in-class curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The logistics (including preparation, transportation and scheduling) of the simulation were easy to manage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The simulation ran smoothly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students appeared engaged during the simulation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteers were helpful to students during the simulation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the space below to provide an explanation for your response. <i>(Optional)</i>				
<hr/>				
<hr/>				
<hr/>				

## Teachers and Volunteers

Please rate your level of agreement with each statement below as it relates to the teachers and volunteers participating in <i>JA Finance Park</i> .	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4	Not Applicable 5
<b>Teachers</b> were interested in having this JA program in their classrooms.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was easy to recruit <b>volunteers</b> for the simulation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I found it easy to train <b>teachers</b> for the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I found it easy to train <b>volunteers</b> for the simulation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please use the space below to provide an explanation for your response. <i>(Optional)</i>					
<hr/>					
<hr/>					
<hr/>					

## Overall

Using the following five-point scale, please rate the quality of the program overall.

Extremely Unsatisfactory       Unsatisfactory       Satisfactory       Good       Exceptional

Do you have any other comments regarding the *JA Finance Park* program?

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**Thank You!**

## Appendix C: Teacher Post-Program Survey

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# JA Finance Park™

## Teacher Post-Program Survey

**This is a survey for teachers who participated in JA Finance Park. Your responses are important for the evaluation of the program. Thank you for your help!**

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How many times have you participated in JA prior to this program of JA Finance Park?

- This is my first time participating in JA (If checked, skip to Q\_\_)  
 1 time     2 times     3 times     4 times     5-7 times  
 8-10 times     11+ times

Have you participated in JA Finance Park before?

- Yes     No

What grade level(s) received this program? (Please check all that apply)

- 6<sup>th</sup>     7<sup>th</sup>     8<sup>th</sup>     Other (Please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

What subjects do you teach? (Please check all that apply)

- Mathematics     Economics     Science     English     Health/Life Skills  
 Social Studies     History     Other (Please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

What is your ethnic/racial background? (Please check all that apply)

- African American/Black     Asian     Pacific Islander     Caucasian/White  
 Latino/Hispanic     Native American/Alaska Native     Other (Please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

### Classroom Materials

Please rate your level of agreement with each statement as it relates to the classroom materials for JA Finance Park.	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
The materials provided made it easy to prepare for each lesson.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Guide for Teachers was easy to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Guide for Teachers provided a practical, step-by-step description of each lesson.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Guide for Teachers and student materials worked well together.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The materials held the students' attention.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The materials were free of stereotyping or bias.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The materials were attractive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The materials were of good quality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The materials appealed to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the space below to provide an explanation for your response. *(Optional)*

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Are there any additional materials that should be included in the program?

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Using the following five-point scale, please rate the quality of the *JA Finance Park materials* overall.

- Extremely Unsatisfactory   
  Unsatisfactory   
  Satisfactory   
  Good   
  Exceptional

### Classroom Curriculum

Please rate your level of agreement with each statement below as it relates to the <i>JA Finance Park</i> curriculum.	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
The curriculum encouraged students' creativity and imagination.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The information in the curriculum conveyed the program's concepts to the students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The curriculum held the students' attention.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The curriculum resulted in a high level of student participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The curriculum met the standards required by the state, district, and school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The curriculum aligned well with my regular course curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I felt comfortable teaching the curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The curriculum was age-appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The curriculum was applicable to the "real world."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the space below to provide an explanation for your response. *(Optional)*

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Using the following five-point scale, please rate the quality of the of *JA Finance Park curriculum* overall.

- Extremely Unsatisfactory   
  Unsatisfactory   
  Satisfactory   
  Good   
  Exceptional

On average, the length of the **individual** lessons was...

- Too short   
  Just right   
  Too long

The length of the program **overall** was...

- Too short       Just right       Too long

## Simulation

The simulation site that my class visited was:

- A mobile unit  
 A permanent site at a JA Office

Were you able to complete the required lessons prior to the simulation?

- Yes       No

If no, please explain your answer.

---



---

The length of the simulation was...

- Too short       Just right       Too long

<b>Please rate your level of agreement with each statement below as it relates to the JA Finance Park simulation.</b>	<b>Extremely Unsatisfactory</b> 1	<b>Unsatisfactory</b> 2	<b>Satisfactory</b> 3	<b>Good</b> 4	<b>Exceptional</b> 5
Logistics (including preparation, transportation, and scheduling)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Space provided for the simulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time allocated to the simulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flow of the simulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facility layout and design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Execution of the simulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students' comfort level with the simulation content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students' level of engagement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relationship of the simulation to the "real world"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Design of the materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Degree/level of volunteer participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Degree to which the simulation was aligned with the course curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value the simulation added to the in-class curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the space below to provide an explanation for your response. (*Optional*)

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---

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Did you receive enough information from JA to prepare you for the simulation?

Yes       No

If no, please explain

---

---

Using the following five-point scale, please rate the quality of the of *JA Finance Park simulation* overall.

Extremely Unsatisfactory       Unsatisfactory       Satisfactory       Good       Exceptional

### Overall

I was properly trained for the program.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
I would participate in Junior Achievement again.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
If no, why not? <hr/> <hr/>			
I would recommend <i>JA Finance Park</i> to other teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
If no, why not? <hr/> <hr/>			

What did you like **most** about *JA Finance Park*?

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What did you like **least** about *JA Finance Park*?

---

---

Do you have any other comments regarding *JA Finance Park*?

---

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**Thank You!**

## Appendix D: Volunteer Post-Simulation Survey

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## JA Finance Park™ Volunteer Post-simulation Survey

**This is a survey for volunteers who participated in the JA Finance Park simulation. Your responses are important for the evaluation of the program. Thank you for your help!**

1. Company/Organization Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many times have you volunteered for JA prior to this program of JA Finance Park?

- <sub>1</sub> This is my first time volunteering for JA  
<sub>2</sub> 1 time                      <sub>3</sub> 2 times                      <sub>4</sub> 3 times                      <sub>5</sub> 4 times                      <sub>6</sub> 5-7 times  
<sub>7</sub> 8-10 times    <sub>8</sub> 11+ times

4. Have you ever volunteered for JA Finance Park before?

- <sub>1</sub> Yes                      <sub>2</sub> No

5. What is your ethnic/racial background? (Please check all that apply)

- African American/Black     Asian     Pacific Islander                       Caucasian/White  
 Latino/Hispanic                       Native American/Alaska Native                       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Please rate your agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4	Not Applicable 5
a. The volunteer registration process was easy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. I was properly trained for the simulation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. I was provided adequate JA staff support during the simulation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I was provided with the proper materials to support the students in completing the simulation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. What were your impressions of the following?

	Extremely Unsatisfactory 1	Unsatisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Good 4	Exceptional 5
a. Space provided for the simulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Time allocated to the simulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Flow of the simulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Facility layout and design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Usefulness of the volunteer and student materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Execution of the simulation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Students' comfort level with the simulation content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Students' level of engagement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Relationship of the simulation to the "real world"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Please continue on the next page)

8. By volunteering, I accomplished the following:

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
a. I felt good about myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. I made a difference in the lives of young people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. My connection to young people improved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I was able to interact directly with students for most of the time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. My participation was vital to the success of the simulation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. What did you like **most** about the *JA Finance Park* simulation?

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10. What did you like **least** about the *JA Finance Park* simulation?

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11. I would like to volunteer for Junior Achievement again.

<sub>1</sub> Yes      <sub>2</sub> No

11b. If **no**, why not?

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12. I would recommend volunteering for *JA Finance Park* to my friends or co-workers.

<sub>1</sub> Yes      <sub>2</sub> No

12b. If **no**, why not?

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13. Using the following five-point scale, please rate the quality of the simulation **overall**.

<sub>1</sub> Extremely Unsatisfactory    <sub>2</sub> Unsatisfactory    <sub>3</sub> Satisfactory    <sub>4</sub> Good    <sub>5</sub> Exceptional

14. Do you have any other comments regarding the *JA Finance Park* simulation?

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**Thank you!**

## Appendix E: Moderator's Guide for Students

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# JA Worldwide JA Finance Park Moderator’s Guide for Students

## I. INTRODUCTION

Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am from a nonprofit research firm called the Evaluation and Training Institute. Junior Achievement has a lot of questions about *JA Finance Park*, and has asked us to help them find the answers. So today, I would like hear your opinions and advice about the program by telling me what’s working for you, what’s not working, what you like, and what you don’t like. I am very pleased to have you here today and look forward to hearing your opinions.

## II. GROUND RULES

1. Before we begin I am going to lay out some ground rules to keep us on time, and also to ensure that I hear from everyone.
2. All of your answers will remain confidential, which means that your names will not be linked to anything you say today.
3. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. We welcome everyone’s opinion.
4. 3) It is okay to say, “I don’t know.”
5. We are audio-recording the discussion to help us remember our meeting later. We also have a person from our staff taking notes. For the sake of the note-taker, please let someone finish speaking before you begin.
6. The discussion will last between thirty and forty minutes. To keep things moving there will be no breaks. However, you can leave to use the restroom at any time. (Explain where the restroom is located.)
7. Do you have any questions before we begin?

## III. STUDENT REACTIONS TO THE SPECIFIC LESSONS AND PROGRAM OVERALL

1. When you first heard that you were going to be participating in this program, what did you expect the program to be like?  
Probes: Easy? Hard? Useful? Different from your regular school work?
2. What do you think of the program now?
3. How has *JA Finance Park* compared to your regular classwork?

4. How easy or hard has it been to understand the information covered in the lessons?  
Probe: Were there particular lessons or ideas that were harder to understand than others?
5. Were any of the instructions, games, or activities confusing or too complicated?
6. Please tell me one thing you have learned from the program so far.  
Probes: About financial institutions, creating a budget, different types of taxes...
7. Do you think the information you have learned in the program will be useful to you in the future? If yes, please explain what will be useful and how.
8. Has the program influenced your future career or education plans? If so, how?
9. What have you enjoyed **most** about the program so far?  
Probes: Lectures, group activities, games, hands-on activities, a particular session?
10. What have you enjoyed **least** about the program so far?  
Probes: Lectures, group activities, games, hands-on activities, a particular session?
11. Are there any other comments you would like to make?

#### **IV. CLOSING**

That concludes our discussion. Thank you all very much for your opinions and comments. I hope that this was an enjoyable experience for you.

## Appendix F: Moderator's Guide for JA Staff

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**JA Worldwide**  
**JA Finance Park**  
**Moderator’s Guide for JA Member Staff**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am from the Evaluation and Training Institute, a non-profit research and consulting firm located in Los Angeles, California. As you know, we are conducting an evaluation of the *JA Finance Park* middle grades program and we would like to talk to you about your experiences with the program thus far.

**II. PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS**

- Name(s) of JA Member Staff and title/position at JA: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How long you have worked for JA? \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you observed any in-class lessons? If so, which ones and how many times?
- Have you observed the simulation? If so, how many times?

**III. REACTIONS**

1. To the best of your knowledge, how are students reacting to the program?
2. To the best of your knowledge, how are teachers reacting to the program?

**IV. PROGRAM MATERIALS**

3. Are there any particular lessons or concepts that you know of that are either too hard or too easy for the students?
4. Have you reviewed the *JA Finance Park* program materials/kit? If so, please answer the following questions:

4a.) On a 1 to 5 scale, five being the highest rating, how would you rate the effectiveness of each of the following program materials as a tool to facilitate student understanding: (display a list)

- Guide for Teachers
- Student Workbooks
- Gotta Have It Cards (Unit 1)
- Credit “Cards” (Unit 1)

- The Price We Pay Cards (Unit 2)
- Tax Cards (Unit 2)
- What If? Cards (Unit 3)
- Life Situation Cards (Unit 4)
- Lucky/Unlucky Chance Cards (Unit 4)
- JA Finance Park Video (Unit 4)
- Career Cluster Cards (Unit 7)
- Occupation Guide (Unit 7)

4b.) For any items receiving a rating under 4, ask the staff member to provide an explanation for the rating.

4c.) To what extent do the program materials present the curriculum content in an effective and interesting way?

**V. THE JA FINANCE PARK CURRICULUM**

5. To what extent do the lessons contain valuable information for students to know?
6. Do you think the curriculum is presented in a relevant way to students? Are they able to relate the information to their own lives?
7. How does the quality of *JA Finance Park* compare to other JA programs with which you are familiar? Please respond to this question in terms of the overall program, rather than discussing individual classes or volunteers.
8. What value does the simulation add to the in-class portion of the program?

**VI. SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF THE PROGRAM**

9. What do you consider to be this program’s greatest successes?
10. What do you consider to be this program’s greatest challenges?
11. Have you encountered any obstacles in implementing *JA Finance Park*? (e.g., difficulty recruiting volunteers, finding teachers/schools willing to participate in the program, etc.)

**VII. CLOSING**

12. Is there anything else you would like to add about *JA Finance Park*?

That concludes our focus group interview. Thank you very much for your valuable input and participation. I hope that this was an enjoyable experience for you.

## Appendix G: Moderator's Guide for Teachers

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# JA Worldwide JA Finance Park Moderator’s Guide for Teachers

## I. INTRODUCTION

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am from the Evaluation and Training Institute, a research firm located in Los Angeles, California. We have invited you here today to talk about your experiences with *JA Finance Park*.

Today we will talk about: 1) students’ reactions to the program; 2) the *JA Finance Park* materials and curriculum; and, 3) the successes and challenges of the program.

We’re very glad that you are here. I hope everyone is comfortable.

## II. GROUND RULES

Before we begin I am going to lay out some ground rules. The rules will help us to complete the focus group in the available time, and also to ensure that I hear feedback from everyone who would like to provide it.

- 1) All of your answers will remain confidential. Your names will not be linked to your comments in any reports.
- 2) There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. We welcome everyone’s opinion.
- 3) It is okay to say, “I don’t know.”
- 4) We are audio-recording the discussion to help us correctly recall the discussion. We also have an ETI staff person taking notes. For the sake of the note-taker, please let someone finish speaking before you begin.
- 5) The discussion will last approximately one hour, and to keep things moving, there will be no breaks. However, you can leave to use the restroom at any time. (Explain where the restroom is located.)
- 6) Do you have any questions before we begin?

## III. PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS

Let’s have each of you start by:

- Introducing yourself by your first name only; and,
- Indicate the last *JA Finance Park* lesson your class has completed.

#### IV. STUDENT REACTIONS TO THE SPECIFIC SESSIONS AND OVERALL PROGRAM

1. How would you describe students’ overall reactions to the program? (challenged, excited, bored, interested, indifferent ...)
2. So far, was there a particular lesson or activity that students liked or enjoyed the most? If so, which one(s)? And why?
3. Was there a particular lesson or activity that students did not seem to like or enjoy as much? If so, which one(s)? And why?
4. Is there a particular lesson or concept that you found especially challenging for your students?
5. Are students retaining the concepts from previous lessons?

#### V. MATERIALS

6a.) On a one-to-five scale with five being the highest rating, how would you rate the effectiveness of each of the following program materials as a tool to facilitate student understanding: (distribute a list)

- Guide for Teachers
- Student Workbooks
- Gotta Have It Cards (Unit 1)
- Credit “Cards” (Unit 1)
- The Price We Pay Cards (Unit 2)
- Tax Cards (Unit 2)
- What If? Cards (Unit 3)
- Life Situation Cards (Unit 4)
- Lucky/Unlucky Chance Cards (Unit 4)
- JA Finance Park Video (Unit 4)
- Career Cluster Cards (Unit 7)
- Occupation Guide (Unit 7)

6b.) For any items receiving a rating under 4, ask the teacher to provide an explanation for the rating.

#### VI. CURRICULUM

7. Do the lessons build logically upon one another (i.e. lesson 1 to lesson 2, etc.)?
8. Are the lessons paced appropriately?
9. To what extent does the curriculum contain valuable information for students to know?
10. To what extent does the program curriculum support differentiated learning styles (i.e didactic vs. experiential; visual, auditory, and kinesthetic)?
11. Have you noticed any learning gaps in the curriculum? If so, what?
12. What contribution does the program make to your regular in-class curriculum?

13. Do you have all the information you need to successfully teach this program? If not, what other information would be useful to you?

**VII. SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF THE PROGRAM**

14. What do you consider to be this program’s greatest successes?

15. What do you consider to be this program’s greatest challenges?

**VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

16. Do you have any other comments regarding *JA Finance Park*?

**IX. CLOSING**

That concludes our discussion. Thank you all very much for your valuable input and participation!

## Appendix H: Simulation Observation Protocol

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## **JA Finance Park Site Observation Guide for JA Finance Park Simulation**

Please complete the site observation guide for each *JA Finance Park* simulation observation.

### **General Information**

1. Observation Date \_\_\_\_\_
2. Observation Start Time \_\_\_\_\_ Observation End Time \_\_\_\_\_
3. Location \_\_\_\_\_
4. Name(s) of School(s) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Name(s) of Teacher(s) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Name(s) of Volunteer(s) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Name(s) of JA Staff Member(s) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Number of Students Observed by Grade Level  
 6<sup>th</sup> # \_\_\_\_\_  7<sup>th</sup> # \_\_\_\_\_  8<sup>th</sup> # \_\_\_\_\_  Other # \_\_\_\_\_

### **Simulation Overview**

9. Describe the simulation instructions and list all tasks that students participate in (i.e. taxes, budgeting, occupational research, lunch activities, etc.).

10. List the specific references to school and the real world observed and how they were made.

School and Real World Connections	Made by Host(s)	Made by Students
Example: The importance of having good mathematical skills (i.e. money management skills).		
Notes:		
Example: The steps involved in creating a budget.		
Notes:		
Example: How taxes impact income and expenses.		
Notes:		
Example: The cost of living (i.e. apartments, groceries, clothing, etc.).		
Notes:		
Example: The importance of considering opportunity costs when making a financial decision.		
Notes:		
Example: The relationship between careers and income.		
Notes:		
Example: The importance of considering the needs and wants of others (i.e. family).		
Notes:		
Example: The importance of self-management skills.		
Notes:		
Example: Each person is responsible for their own learning.		
Notes:		
Other:		
Notes:		

11. On a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 is defined as “not at all” and 10 is “extremely,” rate the extent to which the following JA staff/volunteer and student behaviors are observed. Add relevant comments for each activity in the comments section. If specific behaviors are observed for more than one activity, note which activities generated the strongest and weakest behaviors.

**JA Staff/Volunteer “Host” Behaviors**

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Rank or N/A</b>	<b>Supporting Examples/Comments</b>
a. The hosts were prepared and organized.		
b. The hosts appeared comfortable presenting the activities/tasks.		
c. The hosts were enthusiastic when interacting with the students.		
d. The directions given by the hosts were clear and easy to follow.		
e. The hosts encouraged questions and discussion about activities.		
f. The hosts clearly and thoroughly answered the students’ questions.		
g. The hosts asked the students about their career goals.		
h. The hosts asked the students about their experiences with personal finance.		

**Student Behaviors**

Measures	Rank or N/A	Supporting Examples/Comments
i. The students were prepared (i.e. paper and pencil for notes, completed necessary Student Workbook worksheets, etc.).		
j. The students appeared to grasp the skills and ideas presented.		
k. The students appeared comfortable with the design and layout of the simulation.		
l. The students appeared comfortable interacting with the simulation’s technology components.		
m. The students respected the hosts and followed their instructions.		
n. The students were enthusiastic when interacting with the hosts.		
o. The students asked the hosts questions about the activities/tasks under discussion.		
p. The students were comfortable with the hosts.		
q. The students asked the hosts about their experiences as related to the curriculum.		
r. The students were respectful to each other.		
s. The students worked well together in their cooperative learning groups.		
t. The students were able to successfully complete the activities/tasks required.		
u. Overall, the students were engaged in the simulation.		



14. Use this space to generate a brief summary of the simulation's highlights, useful strategies, successes, and challenges.