

JA Finance Park™

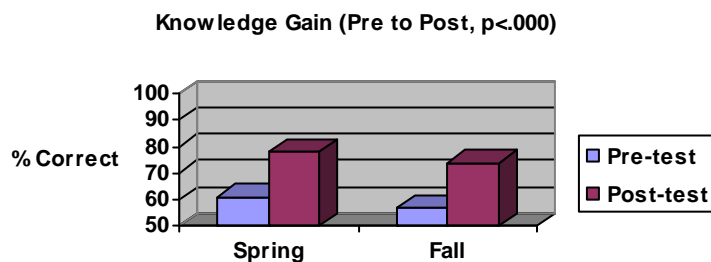
Evaluation Results January 2007

Overview

- *JA Finance Park* introduces students to personal finance and career exploration through classroom instruction complemented by a hands-on experience where students apply concepts.
- Junior Achievement of Minnesota, Twin Cities, contacted the University of Minnesota Extension to conduct a program evaluation of *JA Finance Park*.
- The purpose of the evaluation was to assess program quality and effectiveness. Data collection consisted of a student pre- and post-test; an online survey of teachers, volunteers, and students; group interviews; and analysis of a reflective writing assignment by students.

Student Impact

- A total of 981 students participated in the evaluation. The majority of students (88%) were in the 8th grade.
- The majority of students felt that *JA Finance Park* was an exciting way to learn about personal finances (68%).
- As a group, students significantly increased their content knowledge ($p < .000$) by participating in the program. 86% of the students increased their scores on the post-test by an average of 6-7 percentage points.



Volunteer and Teacher Impact

- Teachers believed the experience had an effect on the following student behaviors: setting priorities on how to spend money (87%); developing a personal budget (92%); applying math skills to personal finance (91%); saving and investing (97%); and understanding the disadvantages of buying on credit (73%).
- Volunteers and teachers agree that the program strengths include the “hands-on approach to teaching” and “providing real-life experiences.”



While at the Finance Park, I learned to do a lot of things. I learned that making choices that make no sense won't get you anywhere. You need to make good choices, costly or not.

– Student Participant

Cited to:
Marczak, M., Hurtado, A., & Olson, P. (2008). Junior Achievement Finance Park Pilot Evaluation. *University of Minnesota Extension – Family Development*.