

Our Nation[®]

Overview

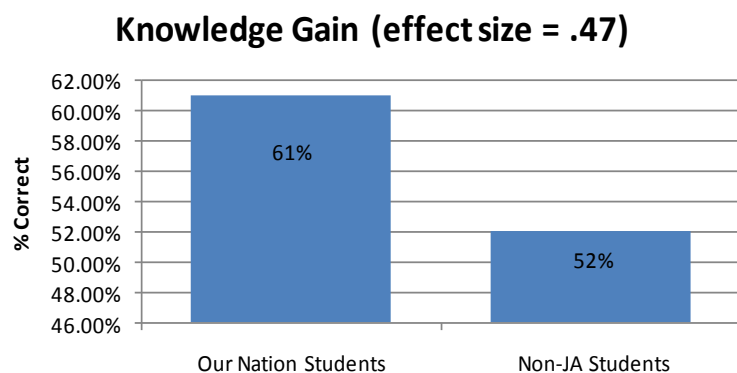
- *Our Nation* is one of eight; JA Worldwide globally distributed programs for elementary schools. Designed for 9- to 11-year-old students, it consists of five sessions that examine issues related to entrepreneurship, resources needed for business, and globalization.
- In fall 2008, a program evaluation was conducted to assess program quality and effectiveness. Data collection consisted of pre-/post-surveys, classroom observations, and focus groups/interviews.
- The evaluation was conducted by RMC Research Corporation, a third-party, Denver-based consulting firm that is a national leader in program research and evaluation, professional development, consultation, and product development.

Sample

- The evaluation employed a rigorous evaluation design with random assignment of classrooms either to treatment or control conditions. Treatment refers to those classrooms participating in the *Our Nation* sessions during the course of the study. Control refers to classrooms that participated in the *Our Nation* sessions at a later time from the same school or from a school geographically nearby with similar demographic characteristics. The design used for the evaluation represents the most rigorous test of program impact.
- A total of 37 *Our Nation* classrooms and 38 control classrooms from 14 different states participated in the evaluation.
- The evaluation included 778 pre-/post-matched pairs from *Our Nation* students, 787 pre-/post-matched pairs from control (non-JA) students, 32 teacher surveys, and 26 volunteer surveys.

Student Knowledge Gain

- A student survey, developed to assess program impacts, was piloted in fall 2008. All measures were determined to have good to excellent internal reliability.
- To assess changes in students' content knowledge that occurred over the course of the program, a post-test was administered. The control group of students also took the post-test to measure if students acquire the information being tested outside of *Our Nation*.
- As evidenced by the following table, the average number of correct answers for the *Our Nation* group was significantly higher than those from the control group. This knowledge gain demonstrates the significant impact



Our Nation has on students' knowledge of STEM careers and entrepreneurship.

- To measure the magnitude of program impact, a statistic, called the effect size, was calculated for the program student's post-test scores producing an effect size of .47. The effect size for this evaluation is considered meaningful and indicative of an influential experimental treatment.
- *Our Nation* participation was associated with a significant positive effect on student acquisition of knowledge about STEM careers and knowledge about the skills necessary to obtain jobs in STEM-related fields.
- *Our Nation* participation was associated with greater content knowledge about entrepreneurship, globalization, and business-related vocabulary.

Student Attitudes

- In focus groups, treatment students reported that they liked being in school more on days when *Our Nation* sessions were held than on regular school days.
- A high percentage (89.2%) of students in the focus groups reported that they became more aware of job/career opportunities utilizing STEM skills as a result of participating in *Our Nation*.

I thought what we learned was very useful because I realized that when you grow up, you are going to need skills in the STEM fields. – Student

Teacher Impact

- Teachers agreed that the sessions had real-world relevance, were enjoyed by the students, and had useful group activities.
- They also agreed that *Our Nation* was well aligned with their state's academic standards, was interesting, and was an effective way to teach students about business and entrepreneurship.

They were able to see the importance of furthering their education and that the things they are doing now are preparing them for the future. – Teacher



Volunteer Impact

- The volunteers tended to agree that the program had real-world relevance and was enjoyed by the students.
- Ninety-seven percent of volunteers stated that they would volunteer for JA in the future.

I like the fact that we talked for a little bit but we weren't up there talking for the whole time and there was always an activity to go with that week's lesson. – Volunteer.

Junior Achievement gratefully acknowledges United Technologies Corporation for its dedication to the development and implementation of *Our Nation*.