

Ourselves[®]

Overview

- *Ourselves* is one of eight Junior Achievement USA™ distributed programs for elementary schools. Designed for kindergarten level students, it consists of five, volunteer-led sessions with activities demonstrating helping, working, earning, and saving.
- In fall 2010, a program evaluation was conducted to assess program quality and effectiveness. Data collection consisted of post-program surveys for teachers and volunteers.
- The evaluation was conducted by Junior Achievement USA, but the analysis and reporting was conducted by an outside evaluation firm, the Evaluation and Training Institute (ETI).
- Sample: 72 teachers and 78 volunteers.
- Participating Cities: Phoenix, AZ; Charlotte, NC; Orlando, FL; Richmond, VA; Chattanooga, TN; Colorado Springs, CO; Dallas, TX; Philadelphia, PA; Canton, OH; Birmingham, AL; Kansas City, MO; Saint Louis, MO; New Jersey; Toledo, OH; Tulsa, OK; Providence, RI; Rochester, NY; San Diego, CA; Bowling Green, KY; York, PA; South Dakota; Houston, TX; Hartford, CT; Evansville, IN; Moline, IL; Grand Rapids, MI; Utah; and Wisconsin.

Evaluation Results

Volunteer Effectiveness

- 69 percent of teachers rated their volunteers' overall effectiveness as "very effective" and 64% "strongly agreed" that their volunteer provided value to the program.

I think it's good for kids to learn about the community from someone else in the community rather than me the teacher who is always teaching them. – Teacher

It's a day where they can learn a lot of information (and be engaged) because there are new people coming into their classroom that they can view as role models teaching them activities with real life connections. – Teacher

Program's Alignment with Learning Objectives

- Overall, teachers and volunteers reported that the majority of program objectives were thoroughly addressed.
 - Both teachers and volunteers most highly rated the objective; *students will be able to identify one form of money coins*, with 68% and 79%, respectively, rating it as "thoroughly addressed."
 - Over half of teachers and volunteers rated the following objectives as "thoroughly addressed;" *students will be able to define money, differentiate coins, recognize the importance of working together, discuss the importance of saving money, and identify a place where people save money*, among others.



JA Curriculum

- The majority of teachers who received the *Ourselves* program in their classroom “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the JA curriculum aligned with their regular course curriculum (83%), reflected the state’s educational standards (88%), and was age appropriate (83%).
- Teachers and volunteers felt that the JA curriculum is applicable to the outside world, reinforces the value of education and helps prepare students to be successful in the future, with between 88% and 95% of teachers and volunteers “agreeing” or “strongly agreeing” with these statements.

Yes, I feel it touched on real life experiences concerning money that they might otherwise not learn in a regular class room setting. – Volunteer

[Students] really take in the curriculum and you can really see the light switch turn on when they make the connection of the curriculum to the real world. – Volunteer

Student Engagement

- For the *Ourselves* program, over half of all volunteers “strongly agreed” that students were engaged during the activities (58%) and discussion (58%). Similarly, over half of all teachers “agreed” that students appeared interested in the curriculum (52%) and appeared to understand the concepts presented (54%).

My students liked to stories that went with each lesson and the activities which were very engaging. – Teacher

Student Skills

- Seventy-seven percent of teachers and 82% of volunteers “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that students increased their financial literacy skills.
- Teachers and volunteers also reported that the students improved their teamwork (64% of volunteers and 57% of teachers) and decision-making skills (79% of volunteers and 69% of teachers) through participation in the program.

Overall Impressions

- An overwhelming majority of teachers (83%) and volunteers (93%) rated the program’s instructional materials as “excellent” or “above average.”
- Almost all of the teachers (96%) and all volunteers reported that the program had a positive impact on participating kindergarten students.

The JA program allows students to meet and interact with someone from the community that can teach them valuable life skills. Having someone different in the classroom teaching and reviewing skills is very effective. – Teacher



It gives the children an opportunity to learn through reinforcement. They can see that the skills taught by their teacher are necessary in other lessons. – Volunteer

Future Participation

- As additional evidence of the largely positive experience that teachers and volunteers had, 97% of teachers and 97% of volunteers reported that they would participate in a JA program again.