

EVALUATION OF TEACHER ACADEMY PROGRAM

Prepared for the

Ohio Council on Economic Education

Jeff Rexhausen, Associate Director of Research

Ananta Dubey, Research Associate

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George M. Vredeveld, Director
University of Cincinnati

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Section I

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

Ohio State Treasurer in partnership with Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Council on Economic Education developed Teacher Academy with the aim of providing Ohio high school teachers with training and resources in the field of Personal Finance. This effort is in preparation of personal finance education being mandated for Ohio high school students beginning 2010.

The Ohio Council on Economic Education contracted with the Economics Center for Education & Research to conduct an evaluation of the Teacher Academy program. This report will discuss the results of the Teacher Academy program evaluation.

Methodology

A survey instrument, in the form of a short series of evaluation questions, was developed in order to measure the effectiveness of the program as well as capture the thoughts and attitudes of the participating teachers. The questions also measured the attitudinal changes among teachers upon attending the Teacher Academy. Most questions used measurement scales or checklists, while a few were open-ended in nature.

Attendees and Evaluation Participants

A total of 243 participants (241 teachers and 2 bankers) attended the Teacher Academy held at seven different locations. Out of the 243 participants, 236 (97.1%) filled out the evaluation forms and returned them to their respective centers.

Participant Profile

The area of expertise of participating teachers varied. While 58 percent identified their area of expertise being Family Consumer Science, 23 percent identified Business as their area of expertise. Close to 10 percent noted History as their area of expertise.

Participants' Area Of Expertise	
Area Of Expertise	Percentage of Respondents
Family Consumer Science	58%
Business	23%
History	10%
Economics	8%
Civics	4%
Math	3%

Out of the total participants, 94.5 percent identified the grade levels they teach. Of these, most of the participants (97%) teach grade levels 10 to 12. One percent teach grade level 9 while 2 percent teach grades 7 and 8. Almost 16 percent of the responding participants teach grades 7 and 8 as well as high school.

The participating teachers on an average have an experience of teaching Personal Finance / Economics for more than 12 and a half years.

Experience Teaching Personal Finance / Economics	
Years of experience teaching Personal Finance / Economics	Number of Respondents
15+	85
10-14	39
5-9	39
0-4	46

Section II

Context Of Program Participation

Experience Related with Teaching Personal Finance or Economics

Among the participating teachers, the two most common problems experienced while teaching Personal Finance or Economics were shortage of appropriate teaching material and lack of ideas on class related activities. While 72 percent of the responding participants listed having experienced a shortage of appropriate teaching material, 54 percent identified lack of ideas on class related activities. Lack of confidence was identified by 39 percent of the responding participants.

Problems Faced While Teaching Personal Finance Or Economics (of the 179 responding participants)	
Shortage of appropriate teaching material	72%
Lack of ideas on class related activities	54%
Lack of confidence	39%

(Percentages add to more than 100% because respondents were asked to check all that apply)

Primary Reasons for Attending the Financial Education Teacher Academy

Participants were asked to identify their primary reasons for attending Teacher Academy. Most of the responding participants (64%) identified getting new teaching material as one of their primary reasons for attending the Teacher Academy. Learning new topics related to Personal Finance and Economics and improving teaching skills / pedagogy were the second biggest reasons for attending the Teacher Academy (48% each). The remaining identified professional development and other reasons as their primary reasons.

Primary Reasons For Attending The Teacher Academy (of the 234 responding participants)	
Getting new teaching material	64%
Learning new topics related to Personal Finance and Economics	48%
Improving teaching skills / pedagogy	48%
Professional Development	41%
Other	8%

(Percentages add to more than 100% because respondents were asked to check up to two reasons)

Section III

Respondents' Experience Of Teacher Academy Program

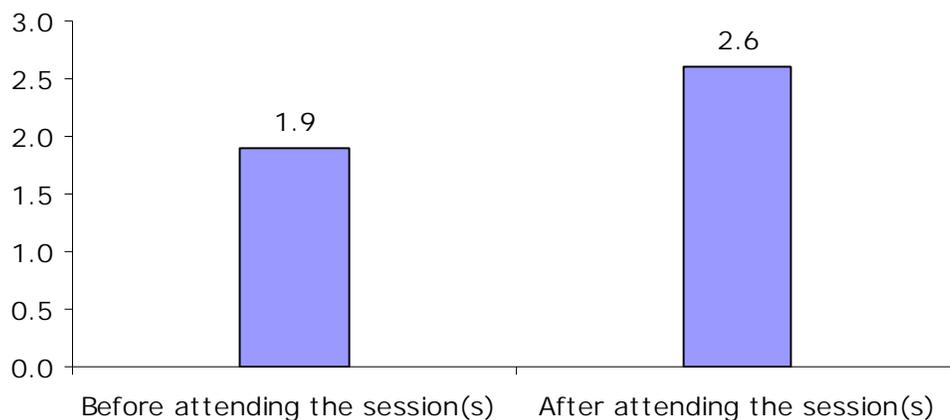
Impact of Teacher Academy Program On Participants' Knowledge Of Personal Finance-related Topics

The Teacher Academy participants were asked to rate their level of knowledge of Personal Finance-related topics before and after attending the Teacher Academy session(s). Almost 64% of the participants reported developing a positive change in their knowledge of the subject. The number of respondents reporting their knowledge level as being fair or poor before attending Teacher Academy was considerably reduced upon attending the Teacher Academy session(s). The following table shows this information.

Participants Reporting Changes In Their Knowledge		
	Before attending session(s)	After attending session(s)
Very Good	54	140
Good	106	90
Fair	59	4
Poor	9	1

The responses were averaged on a 4 point scale ranging from +3 (very good) to 0 (poor). On an average, participants rated their level of knowledge as lying between good and fair (1.9) before attending the session. Upon attending the session the average shows a positive change. Participants reported their level of knowledge to have gone up to lie between very good and very good (2.6). The following graph shows this change in the level of knowledge before and after attending the session(s).

Knowledge-based Changes After Attending Teacher Academy



[+3: Very Good, +2: Good, +1: Fair, 0: Poor]

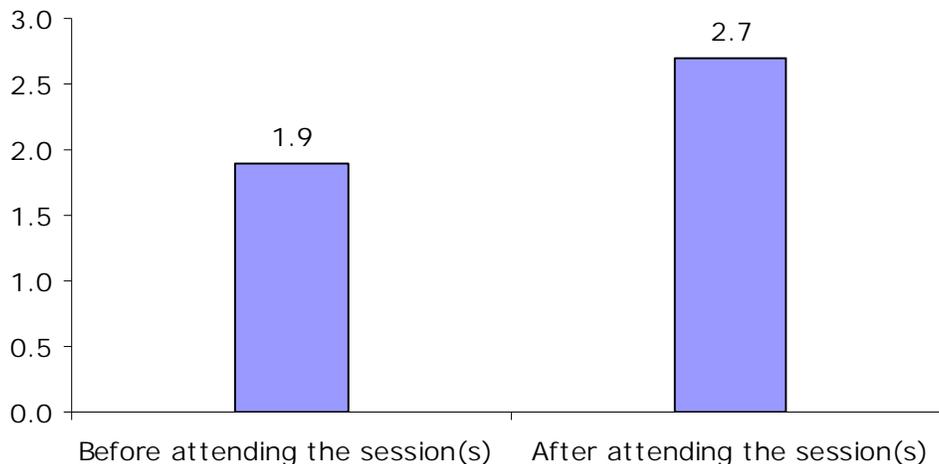
Impact On Overall Comfort With Teaching Topics Covered In Teacher Academy

A positive improvement is reported by program participants with respect to their overall comfort with teaching topics covered in Teacher Academy upon attending the session(s). Almost 66% of the participants reported developing a positive change in their comfort with teaching topics covered in Teacher Academy session(s). The number of respondents reporting their comfort level as being fair or poor before attending Teacher Academy was considerable reduced upon attending the Teacher Academy session(s). The following table shows this information.

Participants Reporting Changes In Their Comfort With Teaching Topics Covered In Session(s)		
	Before attending session(s)	After attending session(s)
Very Good	56	159
Good	110	73
Fair	51	0
Poor	13	2

The responses were averaged on a 4 point scale ranging from 3 (very comfortable) to 0 (very uncomfortable). On an average, participants rated their comfort level with teaching Personal Finance / Economics as 1.9 before attending the session(s). Upon attending the session(s) the average shows a positive change. Participants reported their comfort level as 2.7 upon attending the session(s). The following graph shows this change in the level of comfort with teaching Personal Finance / Economics before and after attending the session(s).

Overall Comfort With Teaching Personal Finance / Economics Before And After Attending Teacher Academy



[+3: Very Good, +2: Good, +1: Fair, 0: Poor]

Participants also provided positive feedback on their comfort level with teaching the different topics covered in various units of the Teacher Academy. Their average comfort level ranged from 1.0 to 1.8 on a scale of +2 (very comfortable) to -2 (very uncomfortable). The average of all ratings listed by all participants is 1.5, which lies between comfortable and very comfortable. The following table shows this information.

Comfort Level In Teaching The Topics Covered In Different Units	
Unit 1: Decision Making & Money	1.5
Unit 2: Working & Earning	1.8
Unit 3: Getting Your Money's Worth	1.7
Unit 4: Credit	1.6
Unit 5: Wealth Creation & Management	1.0
Unit 6: Protecting Yourself	1.4
Average	1.5

[+2: Very Comfortable, +1: Comfortable, -1: Uncomfortable, -2: Very Uncomfortable]

Section IV

Teacher Academy Program Evaluation

Aspects Of The Program

The Teacher Academy participants provided very positive feedback on the program's usefulness and objectives. Participants were asked to rate different aspects of the Teacher Academy program on a scale of +2 (strongly agree) to -2 (strongly disagree). Program's usefulness in terms of imparting useful ideas, techniques, skills and teaching material received an average rating of 1.9. The selection of topics covered in the sessions also received a very positive rating of 1.8. The overall rating for different aspects of the program is calculated at 1.8. The following table reports the average ratings given to different aspects of the program.

Rating For Different Aspects of Teacher Academy	
a. The program offered useful ideas, techniques, and skills	1.9
b. Teaching materials were helpful and I intend to use them in class	1.9
c. Information in a way that was easy to understand and then adapt	1.7
d. The selection of topics covered in the sessions was appropriate	1.8
e. The objectives of the program were clearly stated	1.7
f. This program lived up to my expectations	1.7
g. I would attend an advanced training session on the same topic	1.7
Average	1.8

Strengths And Weaknesses Of The Program

Participants were asked to list strengths or weaknesses of the program. Out of the 236 total number of participants, 196 responded to the question (83%). Out of these responding participants, 81 percent commented on the various strengths of the program. Most commonly reported strength (113 respondents) of the program was the resources and teaching provided in the sessions. Instructors and their teaching style was the second most commonly reported strength (36 respondents).

It appears that the time allotted to the program was perceived as being short and that was one commonly reported weakness (14 respondents). Appendix 1 lists the different strengths and weaknesses of the program as reported by the participants.

Suggestions For Improving The Teacher Academy

Close to 59 percent of the participants gave suggestions for improving the Teacher Academy program. One of the most common suggestions given by the program participants was with regard to getting more time while covering individual topics (28 respondents). The other

most common suggestion was to have the computers running efficiently and having adequate access to computers while the program was in session (15 respondents). Appendix 2 lists the different suggestions given by the program participants.

Conclusion

The Teacher Academy program conducted across seven different centers has been helpful in imparting knowledge to teachers in the areas of Personal Finance and Economics. This is evident from the self-assessment of program participants. The participants have reported their level of knowledge to have gone up after attending the Teacher Academy session(s). A positive improvement was also reported by program participants in their comfort-level with teaching Personal Finance and Economics upon attending Teacher Academy. Upon attending Teacher Academy, the number of participants reporting their knowledge and comfort-level with teaching as fair or poor almost disappeared.

The Teacher Academy program was rated high on its different aspects associated with overall program usefulness, methodology and approach. The program received a 1.8 average rating by the participants on a scale of +2 (strongly agree) to -2 (strongly disagree). This points towards the usefulness and relevance of the program as perceived by the participants. Overall it may be concluded that Teacher Academy was successful in its purpose and effort.

Each of the six different units covered in Teacher Academy received a high rating on comfort level with teaching by participants except Unit 5. The Academy may consider providing a session in continuation to the effort in order to cover the topics of Unit 5 in greater detail.

APPENDIX 1

Strengths And Weaknesses Of The Program As Identified By Respondents

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Materials and resources provided in the program	1. Way too much information for a novice
2. Presentation given by instructors	2. Less time allotted to the sessions and individual topics
3. Familiarity of instructors with the material provided	3. Less time for discussions and sharing of ideas
4. Motivation, knowledge and enthusiasm of the speakers	4. Technical problems related with audio / visuals and computers
5. Organization of the program	5. Too much information for two days
6. Materials provided were usable in the class	6. A lot of time permitted for attendees to raise issues and questions that took time away from presenters
7. Enormous amount of information in a short time	7. Overall organization of the program
8. Organization of modules	8. Less time for going through the resources
9. Box of supplies	9. Savings and Investing needs more time, separate from this Academy
10. Discussion and sharing of ideas	10. Need for a separate course on wealth creation and management
11. Free materials	
12. Networking opportunity	

APPENDIX 2

Suggestions Given By Respondents For Improving Teacher Academy

1. Class extension to allow more interaction amongst participants
2. Give more directions for the slower, more challenged student
3. Find a few impactful lessons
4. Follow up session to clarify questions
5. Allowing time, after class, to review the information and resources
6. Need for a workshop that teaches topics rather than introducing variety of ways to teach them to students
7. Make it three days
8. Overwhelming need to take some time to sort through all materials
9. Probably need one day per subject
10. Would have liked to have done some activities; a lot of downtime with computer demos
11. Coffee for non soda-drinkers
12. Presenter needs microphone
13. Have access to computer lab so participants could follow along
14. Have computers and time for people to open the CDs and share with the group. Use more variety in lessons.
15. Do more of the activities. Do not read out handouts. More cooperative learning activities.
16. Provide 1 or 2 sheets of all websites to refer to
17. Provide speakers for computer (for hearing videos)
18. Go over one of the modules in the books provided
19. Have a computer savvy person available
20. More comfortable chairs
21. Room temperature was cold. Uncomfortable chairs. Provide coffee all day.
22. Water pitchers on tables
23. Unit II - Career choices - include work ethics.
24. Less reading of resources by presenter
25. Use a variety of instructors
26. Provide highlighters and post-its
27. Smaller group or larger facility
28. I would like to see teaching students how to stay out of debt
29. Meet again to review results from teachers
30. Checking audience knowledge ahead of time so presentations are not redundant
31. Already know some topics
32. How to purchase stocks, importance of financial planners
33. Offer sessions to school districts for staff development
34. This should be a required class for graduation
35. Almost too much info. Hard to sort through

36. More academies
37. More hands on activities. Try to refocus group
38. Have bankers or financial planners come in to speak.
39. Hand out this questionnaire at the beginning of seminar so you can fill out section II as you go
40. Details on investing
41. Bigger room
42. Have students evaluate curriculum and supplementary resources using computer/internet
43. Provide more sessions so more family and consumer science teachers could get this training
44. Spend more time with resources given
45. Conversations, phone ringing, personal questions distracted
46. Many participants took up time asking personal questions
47. Review materials more thoroughly (module 5 was good)
48. Enjoyed having people in attendance from bank
49. Need more than two days to present. The room was too cold for comfort
50. Don't have participants sit so long; move around a bit more. Room was cold
51. Allow speakers more time
52. Make better use of banking professionals
53. Many times, we were sidetracked by participants who came to learn and not teach. More time to work with materials while the experts were around to answer questions
54. Develop an advanced training academy
55. More direction on graduate assignment
56. Convince the teachers to be more aggressive about telling the students to be financially responsible
57. More speakers in specialized fields - business owners who can share their experiences on students' readiness for the work world or college after graduation
58. Opportunity for teachers to check out some of the lesson plan sources provided & then share with group
59. Organize materials in boxes; file in advance so there are enough copies for everyone attending & info is easily accessed
60. More bottled water
61. End a little earlier
62. Better breakfast, please include juice
63. Possible ways of getting out of debt trouble
64. I thought the morning of the first day moved too slowly. More on identity theft, fraud
65. Explanation of the personal finance criteria for HS; explanation of grad credit
66. Omit handbag lottery and M&M game & replace with time teaching teachers economics & investing principles. Have teachers present real curriculum rather than bankers or entrepreneurs

APPENDIX 3

Survey Instrument

FINANCIAL EDUCATION TEACHER ACADEMY Program Evaluation

Please provide your honest feedback. All responses will be kept confidential. Circle appropriate responses.

I. BEFORE AND AFTER ASSESSMENT

1. How would you rate your level of knowledge of personal finance-related topics?

<u>Before attending the session(s)</u>	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
After attending the session(s)	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor

2. How would you rate your overall comfort with teaching the topics covered in the program sessions?
[+2: very comfortable; +1: somewhat comfortable; -1: somewhat uncomfortable; -2: very uncomfortable]

<u>Before attending the session(s)</u>	+2	+1	-1	-2
After attending the session(s)	+2	+1	-1	-2

II. UNIT-SPECIFIC ASSESSMENT

Rate your comfort level in teaching the topics covered in different units (upon attending the sessions).
Please circle your responses.

[+2: very comfortable; +1: somewhat comfortable; -1: somewhat uncomfortable; -2: very uncomfortable]

Unit 1- Decision Making & Money (Economic systems, basic economic concepts)	+2	+1	-1	-2
Unit 2- Working & Earning (Value of education, career choices)	+2	+1	-1	-2
Unit 3-Getting Your Money's Worth (Budgeting, philanthropy)	+2	+1	-1	-2
Unit 4- Credit (Understanding credit, credit cards)	+2	+1	-1	-2
Unit 5- Wealth Creation & Management (Savings, investments, time horizons)	+2	+1	-1	-2
Unit 6- Protecting Yourself (Identity theft, fraud)	+2	+1	-1	-2

III. PROGRAM CONTENT

Please rate the following aspects of the program. Please circle your responses.

[+2: strongly agree; +1: somewhat agree; 0: neutral; -1: somewhat disagree; -2: strongly disagree]

1. The program offered useful ideas, techniques, and skills	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
2. Teaching materials were helpful and I intend to use them in class	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
3. Session co-coordinators presented information in a way that was easy to understand and then adapt	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
4. The selection of topics covered in the sessions was appropriate	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

5. The objectives of the program were clearly stated +2 +1 0 -1 -2
6. This program lived up to my expectations +2 +1 0 -1 -2
7. I would attend an advanced training session on the same topic +2 +1 0 -1 -2
8. What were the strengths or weaknesses of the Financial Education Teacher Academy? _____
-
9. What suggestions (if any) do you have for improving the Financial Education Teacher Academy?
-

IV. REASONS FOR ATTENDING

1. What were your primary reasons for attending the Financial Education Teacher Academy? (Circle no more than two).

- a. improving teaching skills / pedagogy
- b. learning new topics related to Personal Finance and Economics
- c. getting new teaching material
- d. professional development
- e. others (please specify) _____

2. In teaching Personal Finance or Economics which of the following have you experienced (circle all that apply)?

- a. lack of ideas on class related activities
- b. shortage of appropriate teaching material
- c. lack of confidence
- d. other challenges (please list) _____

V. YOUR TEACHING BACKGROUND

1. Area of Expertise:

- a. Business
- b. Civics
- c. Economics
- d. Family Consumer Science
- e. History
- f. Math
- g. Other (please specify) _____

2. Grade levels you teach:

- a. 12
- b. 11
- c. 10
- d. 9
- e. 7-8
- f. Elementary

3. Years of experience teaching Personal Finance / Economics _____

4. How many hours of class time did you spend on the Finance and Economics topics covered in this workshop during the past academic year? _____