

# Additional Efficacy Evidence for the ACT Certified Educator Program Following Its Expansion to Other Subject-Specific Courses

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## Introduction

Formally launched in September 2018, the ACT® Certified Educator™ program is a professional learning and credentialing program designed to help educators<sup>1</sup> improve their teaching and tutoring strategies and skills and be fully equipped to support student learning in the core content areas of the ACT® test. In this study, participants' views of the program were examined following its expansion to math, reading, science, and writing subject-specific courses. Perceptions of the program's value and effectiveness were generally positive across courses. In addition, participants reported that their professional credibility was enhanced after earning certification and that they learned new information from the program that would benefit their students.

The ACT Certified Educator program accomplishes its goals via course learning objectives. Objectives such as acquiring learner-centered skills and facilitating individualized subject-level instruction focus on improving teaching and tutoring strategies and skills. Objectives such as utilizing resources, identifying and recommending strategies, and understanding test structure and content are intended to provide information for a better understanding of the ACT, the research behind it, and what it assesses with the goal of enhancing educators' teaching strategies that help their students learn and succeed on this test.

The formal launch of the program offered only the ACT Certified Educator Basics and English courses. Since then, the program has expanded so that educators can earn certification in any or all four subject-specific courses that reflect the content of the ACT sections (English, math, reading, and science) plus writing. The first Reading course was offered in July 2019, the first Math and Science courses were offered in August 2019, and the first Writing course was offered in December 2019. Currently, ACT Certified Educator courses are offered at various locations across the country throughout the year for individual educators.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the courses are available for high schools and districts to provide the program as a professional learning opportunity for their K–12 educators.



ACT, Inc. 2020

Program applicants are required to complete the ACT Certified Educator Basics course first because it covers the fundamental aspects of the ACT test and a range of other topics applicable to all test sections: principal ACT knowledge, resource utilization, learner-centered skills, and standards of professionalism. Table 1 provides examples of the content related to each main topic covered in the Basics course. The subject-specific courses primarily cover topics such as facilitating individualized subject-level instruction, identifying and recommending strategies, and understanding test structure and content in a specific section (examples for each topic are also shown in Table 1). Learning objectives have been identified for the various topics covered in the courses and are made available to participants in the course materials.

**Table 1.** Examples of Topics Covered in the ACT Certified Educator Courses

Course	Topics	Examples
Basics	Principal ACT knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACT core values</li> <li>• ACT test registration</li> </ul>
	Resource utilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACT test prep</li> <li>• ACT test-day procedures</li> <li>• ACT scores</li> </ul>
	Learner-centered skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualized tutoring and strategic studying</li> <li>• Social and emotional learning</li> <li>• Strategies for day-of-test success</li> </ul>
	Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respectful and appropriate communication with students</li> <li>• Diversity and awareness</li> </ul>
Subject-specific <sup>a</sup>	Facilitating individualized subject-level instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying students' strengths and weaknesses regarding subject content</li> <li>• Understanding students' strategies, approaches, and techniques when solving subject-specific problems</li> <li>• Recommending targeted resources to improve deficiencies</li> </ul>
	Identifying and recommending strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test-taking tips for managing time, accuracy, and efficiency</li> <li>• Differentiating between basic and advanced questions</li> </ul>
	Understanding test structure and content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content/topic areas covered on ACT test section</li> <li>• Skill target of a given ACT test item</li> <li>• Recognition of problem-solving tools for subject</li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup> Subject-specific courses include English, Math, Reading, Science, or Writing.

To become ACT® Basics Certified™, individuals must take the Basics training course and pass an end-of-course exam. To become ACT Certified in English, Math, Reading, or Science, individuals must do the following:

1. achieve a specific score on the corresponding ACT test section to demonstrate content area expertise (this serves as the qualification exam, which is administered on the first day of the two-day, subject-specific course);
2. take the course;
3. pass an end-of-course exam (administered on the second day of the course); and
4. be ACT Basics Certified.

To become ACT Certified in Writing, individuals must take the Writing course, pass an end-of-course exam, and be ACT Basics Certified. If participants do not pass the certification or qualification exam (where applicable) the first time, they have the option to take the exam a second time.

In early 2019, we conducted a study to understand participants' reactions to the initial ACT Certified Educator Basics and English courses that were offered at domestic and international sites in November 2018.<sup>3</sup> Feedback was gathered via an online survey that participants were invited to complete approximately four months after the courses occurred. Findings from this initial study suggested that participants' perceptions of the value and effectiveness of the ACT Certified Educator Basics and English training courses were generally positive. In particular, survey responses suggested that participants found both programs to be relevant and valuable to their role as an educator and that the topics covered in the training courses influenced their teaching strategies and skills. Moreover, many of the participants reported that, after becoming certified, they had experienced enhanced professional credibility and recognition from students and parents.

Now that the program has expanded to include new courses for the other test sections, we wanted to reexamine participants' reactions to the program, especially for the new courses that began to be offered in the summer of 2019. Similar to the initial study, participants' reactions were collected through surveys with the questions focusing on obtaining information and feedback from participants related to the four learner outcomes of Kirkpatrick's evaluation model<sup>4</sup> that are outlined in ACT's Efficacy Framework.<sup>5</sup> The four areas include (1) participants' **reaction** and perceived value of the program, (2) whether the intended **learning** took place as part of the program, (3) whether any new **behaviors** resulted from attending the program and becoming certified, and (4) evidence of **results** leading to intended outcomes. In contrast to the earlier study (Radunzel, Mattern, and Schiel 2019) where only one survey was given four months after the courses occurred, the current study included two surveys. The first survey was sent to all participants shortly after they had completed the course as an opportunity for them to evaluate the course. The second survey was sent six to eight months later, only to those participants who had earned certification, to learn whether the training had influenced their teaching strategies and skills.

For the first learner outcome—reaction—we examined the degree to which participants found each course relevant, engaging, and valuable to their role as an educator, as well

as whether they would recommend the program to others (information primarily collected on the initial survey). For the second learner outcome—learning—we summarized the certification rates, which provided a measure of whether the individuals met the learning objectives for the training. We also examined participants' perceptions of whether they learned new information as well as whether they found value in the specific topics covered in the course (information primarily collected on the initial survey). For the third learner outcome—behaviors—we explored the degree to which the participants indicated that the program as well as the specific topics covered influenced their teaching strategies since earning the certification (information primarily collected on the six-to-eight-month follow-up survey). For the fourth learner outcome—results—we summarized whether, after becoming certified, participants reported experiencing any enhanced professional credibility and recognition from students and parents (information primarily collected on the six-to-eight-month follow-up survey).

We state up front that one major limitation of the current study is that the number of responses received to the follow-up survey was relatively small for each subject-specific course (i.e., 25 or fewer per course). Because response rates (described in the following section) were respectable, the relatively small number of responses does not reflect a lack of willingness of participants to respond to the follow-up survey. What it does reflect is the small number of educators who both participated in the program between July 2019 and December 2019 and earned certification. These individuals are a subset of all program participants, and their representation across courses was not particularly large, ranging from 7 (Writing) to 313 (Basics), with a median of 42 (see Table 2 for additional information).

## Data and Methods

Between July 2019 and March 2020, 564 individuals had taken at least one ACT Certified Educator course (48.6% took one course, 37.4% took two courses, and 14.0% took three or more courses during this period). This number would most likely have been larger had the program not taken a three-month hiatus, beginning in March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of participants varied by course (see Table 2; the number ranged from 43 for Writing to 535 for Basics). All courses were offered domestically. The number of times each course was offered during this period ranged from 4 times for Writing to 26 times for Basics. As shown in Table 2, each course was offered under the two different models—courses offered to individual educators at a national location (labeled as individual educator model) or at the school district (labeled as school district model).

**Table 2.** Summary of ACT Certified Educator Program Course Participants and Survey Respondents by Course

Characteristic	Basics	Math	Science	English	Reading	Writing
Number of participants	535	135	79	96	85	43
Number of times course offered						
Total	26	11	9	13	12	4
Individual educator model	17	5	4	8	9	3
School district model	8	5	4	4	2	1
Hybrid <sup>a</sup>	1	1	1	1	1	0
Number of respondents to initial course evaluation survey	385	88	53	73	60	24
Response rate (%) for initial course evaluation survey	72.0	65.2	67.1	76.0	70.6	55.8
% receiving certification						
Total	96.4	76.3	59.5	82.3	78.8	72.1
Survey respondents	98.2	79.6	67.9	90.4	85.0	79.2
Survey nonrespondents	92.0	70.2	42.3	56.5	64.0	63.2
Number of individuals sent 6-to-8-month follow-up survey <sup>b</sup>	313	59	34	50	32	7
Number of respondents to 6-to-8-month follow-up survey	95	25	16	16	11	3
Response rate (%) for 6-to-8-month follow-up survey	30.4	42.4	47.1	32.0	34.4	42.9

<sup>a</sup> Hybrid is a combination of the two models where the training takes place at a school district that allows individual educators outside the school district to also participate in the program.

<sup>b</sup> At the time of the analyses for this report, the individuals invited to participate on the 6-to-8-month follow-up survey included only those who had both participated in the courses offered July through December 2019 and became ACT Certified.

Typically, within a few days of ACT Certified Educator course completion, participants were invited to respond to an online course evaluation survey to obtain their feedback about the courses they had taken. Reminder emails were sent to nonrespondents to help improve response rates. Although there were a few exceptions, the reminder emails were almost always sent prior to participants being informed whether they had become certified so as to reduce the chances that the survey responses were influenced by the participants' certification status. A total of 420 participants responded to the survey (56.7% took one course, 30.0% took two courses, and 13.3% took three or more courses). The survey response rate for each course was relatively high, ranging from 55.8% for Writing to 76.0% for English.

Among survey respondents, the typical number of years of teaching experience in the specific subject area ranged from 9.4 years for science to 12.1 years for math and English, while the typical number of years helping students prepare for the ACT test ranged from 4.0 years for writing to 9.6 years for math. More details about the

characteristics of respondents to the initial course evaluation surveys are provided in Tables A1 (for the Basics, Math, and Science courses) and A2 (for the English, Reading, and Writing courses) in the Appendix.

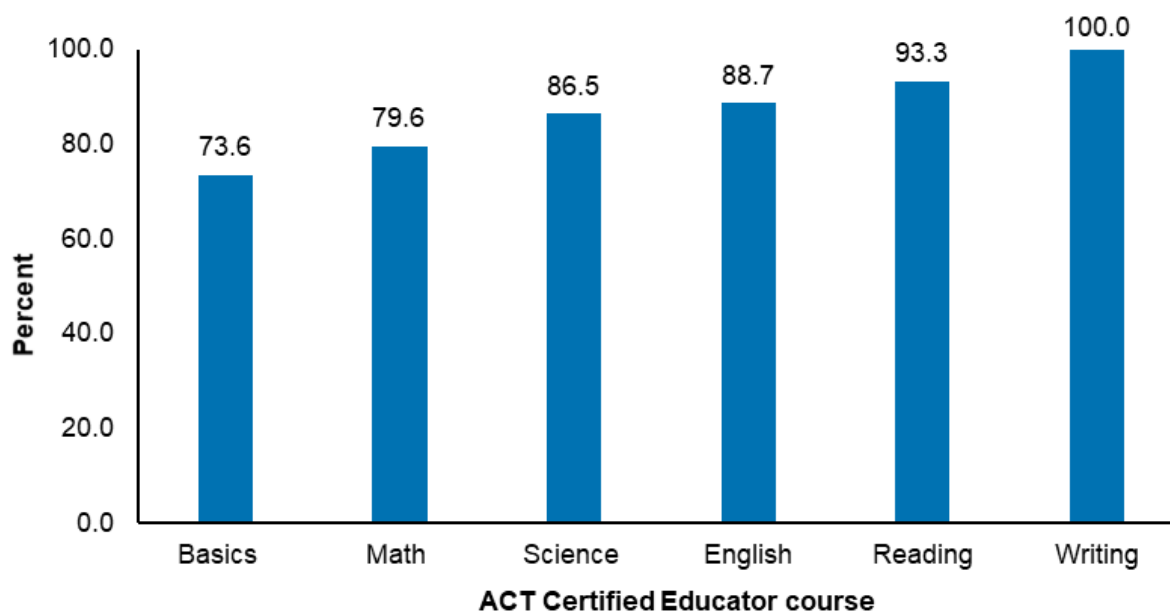
For the courses that were offered July through December 2019, individuals who became ACT Certified were invited to complete a follow-up online survey six to eight months after the courses occurred.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of the follow-up survey was to gather feedback about the value of the program in their role as an educator, whether the training had influenced their teaching strategies and skills, and whether participants had experienced enhanced professional credibility and recognition after becoming certified. As shown in Table 2, the number of respondents and response rates were considerably lower than those for the initial course evaluation surveys; the response rates for the follow-up survey ranged from 30.4% (Basics) to 47.1% (Science).

This study is descriptive in nature, and results are presented as percentages. Percentages for each survey item are based on individuals who responded to the specific item. Results for a survey item are only presented in cases where 10 or more responses were available. For example, responses from ACT Certified Writing Educators on the follow-up survey are not reported given the small number ( $n = 3$ ).

## Results

**Reaction to the Program.** Participants were asked in the initial survey about the degree to which they found the material covered in the program **relevant** for their role as an educator. As shown in Figure 1, participants responded positively to this question with more than 70% of the respondents from each course indicating that it was “very” or “moderately” relevant (percentages ranged from 73.6% for the Basics course to 100.0% for the Writing course).

**Figure 1.** Percentage Who Responded “Very” or “Moderately” Relevant When Describing the ACT Certified Educator Program by Course



Participants were also asked about the degree to which they found the program **valuable** for their role as an educator and the degree to which the material covered was **engaging**, as well as whether the instructor was **well qualified** to teach the course. As shown in Table 3, respondents evaluated most of the courses positively as being valuable and engaging. Responses to these questions tended to be related to whether they thought their instructor was well qualified to teach the course. For example, for the English language arts (ELA)-related courses (English, Reading, and Writing) and the Science course, more than 80% indicated that the instructor was “definitely” or “probably” well qualified to teach the course (ranged from 82.7% to 100%), and more than 84% indicated that the course was “very” or “moderately” engaging and valuable (see statistics reported within the “Total sample of respondents” section).

**Table 3.** Summary of Responses When Describing the ACT Certified Educator Program by Course

Course	Relevant		Engaging		Valuable		Teacher well qualified	
	n	% <sup>a</sup>	n	% <sup>a</sup>	n	% <sup>a</sup>	N	% <sup>b</sup>
<b>Total sample of respondents</b>								
Basics	379	73.6	379	57.3	378	63.8	377	63.8
Math	88	79.6	87	50.6	88	61.4	88	68.2
Science	52	86.5	52	84.6	52	86.5	52	82.7
English	71	88.7	72	86.1	72	86.1	72	94.4
Reading	60	93.3	60	86.7	60	86.7	60	98.3
Writing	18	100.0	18	100.0	18	100.0	18	100.0
<b>Subsample of respondents<sup>c</sup></b>								
Basics	299	82.3	299	71.6	298	74.5	299	100.0
Math	60	95.0	59	66.1	60	80.0	60	100.0
Science	43	90.7	43	86.1	43	86.1	43	100.0
English	67	92.5	68	89.7	68	91.2	68	100.0
Reading	59	94.9	59	88.1	59	88.1	59	100.0
Writing	18	100.0	18	100.0	18	100.0	18	100.0

*Note.* *n* refers to the number of participants responding to the survey question. Possible responses to the course being relevant, engaging, and valuable included *very*, *moderately*, *slightly*, and *not at all*. Possible responses to the teacher being well qualified included *definitely yes*, *probably yes*, *uncertain*, *probably not*, and *definitely not*.

<sup>a</sup> Indicates the percentage responding *very* or *moderately* relevant, engaging, and valuable

<sup>b</sup> Indicates the percentage responding *definitely yes* or *probably yes*

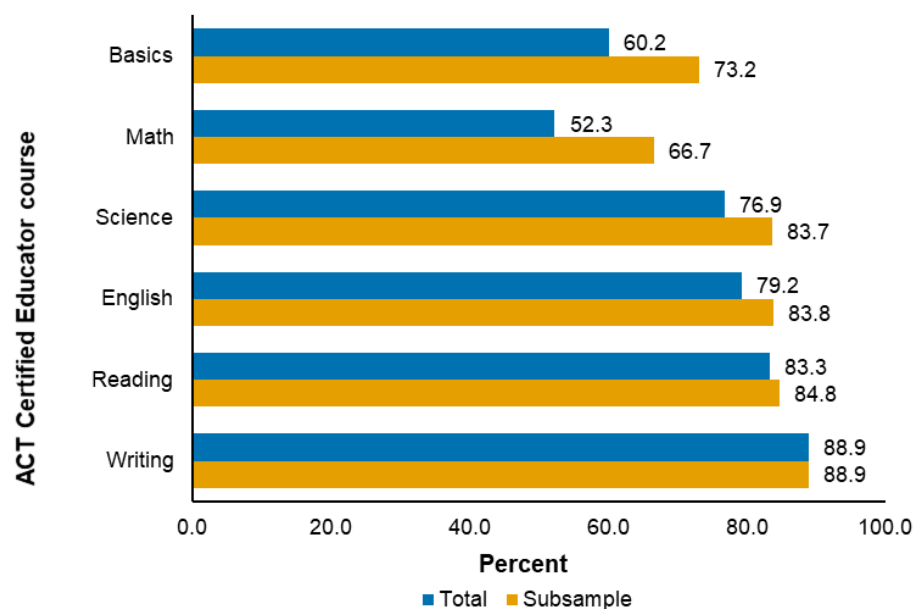
<sup>c</sup> Includes only those participants who responded *definitely yes* or *probably yes* that the instructor was well qualified to teach the course

In contrast, though more than one-half of respondents indicated that the Basics and the Math course were “very” or “moderately” engaging and valuable, these percentages were lower than those seen for the other courses. At the same time, respondents from these two courses were less likely to indicate that the instructor was “definitely” or “probably” well qualified to teach the course (63.8% for Basics and 68.2% for Math). While these findings indicate that there is room for improvement in these

courses, when the analyses were restricted to the subsample of participants who rated the qualifications of the instructor more positively, the course evaluations for the Basics and Math course were considerably more positive (see statistics reported within the “Subsample of respondents” section).<sup>7</sup> For example, the percentage of respondents among the subsample who indicated that the Math course was valuable to their role as an educator was nearly 20 percentage points higher than that for the total sample (80.0% vs. 61.4%). Additionally, based on the total samples for these two courses, it was only a relatively small percentage of the respondents who indicated that they received “no value at all” from taking these courses (7.8% for Basics and 10.2% for Math). Moreover, on the six-to-eight-months follow-up survey, 84.2% or more of the respondents suggested that the training from each course had provided some value to their role as an educator.<sup>8</sup>

Another way to evaluate participants’ reactions to the program is to find out if the participants would recommend the program to others. As shown in Figure 2, a majority of the current study respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the courses they had taken to others (ranged from 52.3% for Math to 88.9% for Writing). The corresponding percentages were higher among the subsample who rated the qualifications of the instructor more positively, especially for the Basics and Math courses (ranged from 66.7% for Math to 88.9% for Writing).

**Figure 2.** Percentage Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed That They Would Recommend the ACT Certified Educator Courses to Others



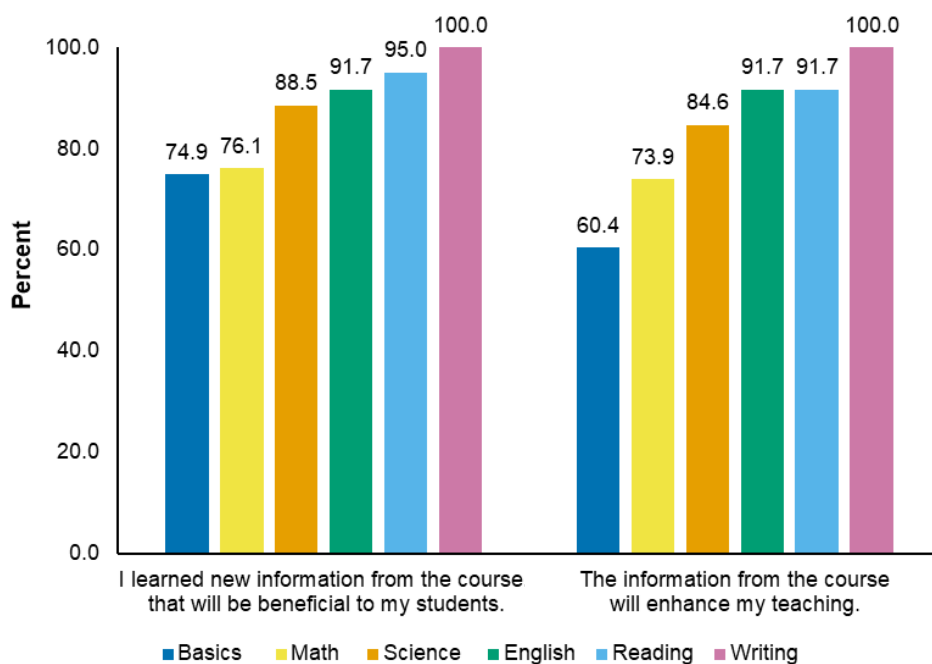
*Note.* Subsample includes only those participants who responded *definitely yes* or *probably yes* that the instructor was well qualified to teach the course.



**Learning and Behaviors.** Certification exams are administered at the end of the training course. Participants who took the ACT Certified Educator English, Math, Reading, and Science courses are also required to take the corresponding ACT test section and achieve a specific score to attain certification. The percentage of participants becoming ACT Certified in each course is shown in Table 2; the percentages ranged from 59.5% in Science to 96.4% in Basics. The certification rates were slightly higher among survey respondents (ranged from 67.9% in Science to 98.2% in Basics) than nonrespondents (ranged from 42.3% in Science to 92.0% in Basics).

Additionally, the respondents generally indicated on the evaluation surveys that they had learned new information from the courses. For example, as shown in Figure 3, the percentage of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they had learned new information from the course that would be beneficial to their students ranged from 74.9% for the Basics course to 100.0% for the Writing course.

**Figure 3.** Percentage Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed to Learning- and Behavior-Related Survey Items by Course



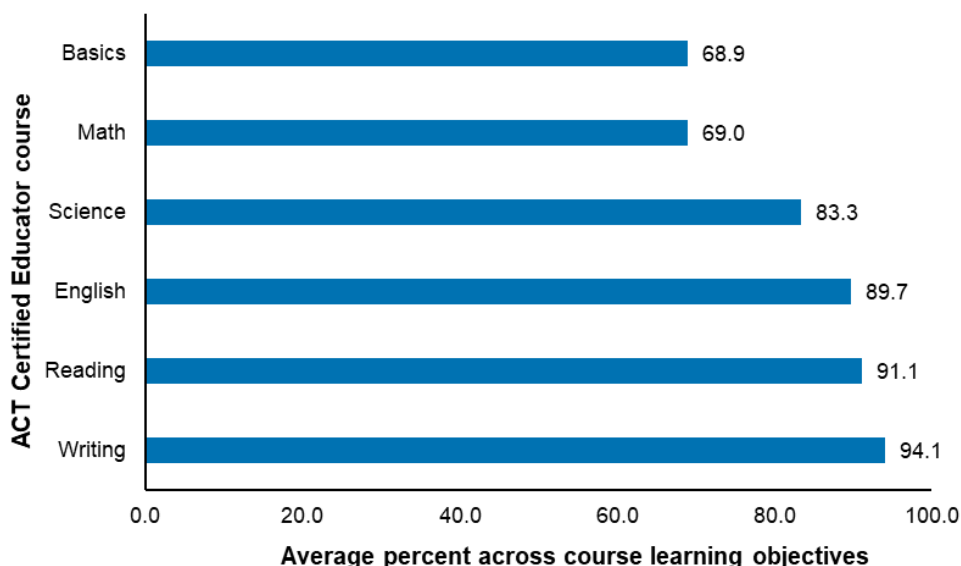
*Note.* The number of individuals responding to these questions was 375 (learned new information from course) and 376 (information from course will enhance my teaching) for Basics, 88 for Math, 52 for Science, 72 for English, 50 for Reading, and 17 for Writing.

Moreover, for the subject-specific courses, a majority of the participants responded positively to the survey item that the information from the course will enhance their teaching strategies and skills in the specific subject area—the percentage that agreed or strongly agreed with this statement ranged from 73.9% for the Math course to 100.0% for the Writing course. The corresponding percentage for the Basics course

was lower at 60.4%; the percentage for this course could be lower because the course is so heavily focused on principal ACT knowledge and resource utilization (e.g., ACT test registration, test prep, test-day procedures; see Table 1). Contrary to this lower percentage on this more general question, we will see in the next section that participants typically responded favorably that the individual learning objectives would provide value to their role as an educator.

For each general learning objective/topic covered in the course (four for Basics and three for the subject-specific courses; see Table 1), participants were asked to rate the value that the information would have in their role as an educator. As shown in Figure 4, the average percentage of respondents indicating the information was “very” or “moderately” valuable across the learning objectives/topics ranged from 68.9% for Basics to 94.1% for Writing.

**Figure 4.** Average Percentage Who Rated Course Learning Objectives as “Very” or “Moderately” Valuable for Role as Educator by Course



The percentage indicating “very” or “moderately” valuable for each individual learning objective is provided in Table 4 for the subject-specific courses. These percentages tended to be relatively high. For example, for the learning objective related to “understanding test structure and content,” the percentage ranged from 75.9% in Math to 94.1% in Writing. The percentage indicating that the information for a learning objective was “not at all” valuable is also provided in the table. These percentages were relatively low—8.0% or below for the subject-specific courses. For the Basics course, the percentage of respondents indicating “very” or “moderately” valuable ranged from 63.0% for “professionalism” to 76.9% for “resource utilization”; the percentage of respondents indicating “not at all” valuable ranged from 3.0% for “resource utilization” and 11.5% for “professionalism” (data not shown in table).

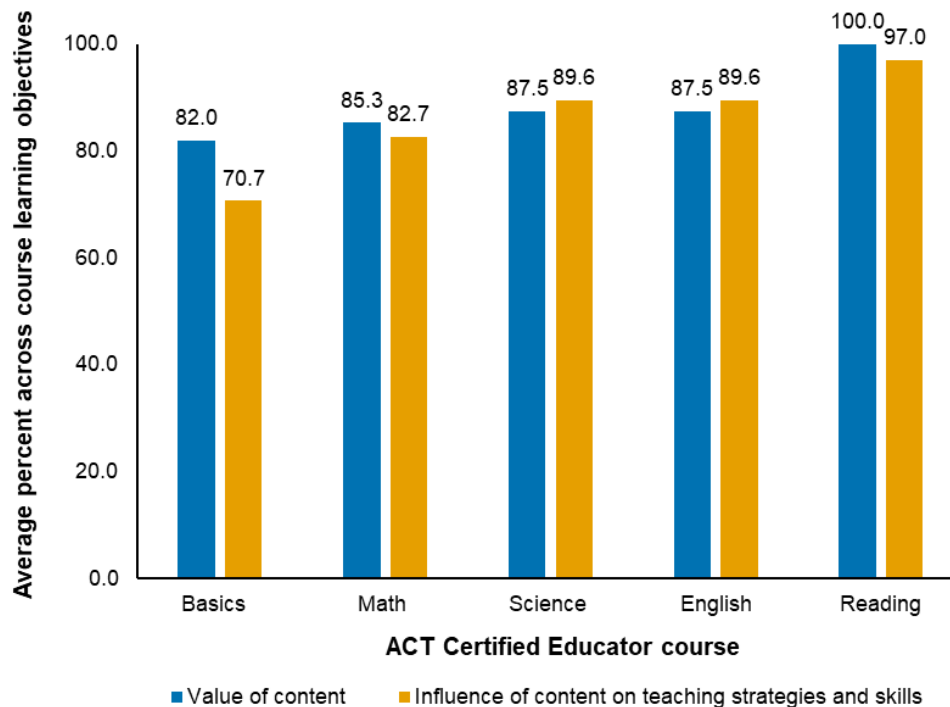
**Table 4.** Summary of Responses When Describing the Value of Learning Objectives by Course

Course	Facilitating individualized subject-level instruction			Identifying and recommending strategies			Understanding test structure and content		
	<i>n</i>	% very or moderately	% not at all	<i>n</i>	% very or moderately	% not at all	<i>n</i>	% very or moderately	% not at all
Math	87	66.7	8.0	87	64.4	6.8	87	75.9	3.4
Science	50	78.0	5.7	50	82.0	1.9	49	89.8	1.9
English	71	91.6	1.4	71	85.9	2.7	71	91.6	0.0
Reading	60	91.7	1.7	60	93.3	1.7	60	88.3	0.0
Writing	17	94.1	0.0	17	94.1	0.0	17	94.1	0.0

Note. The possible responses included *very*, *moderately*, *somewhat*, or *not at all* valuable.

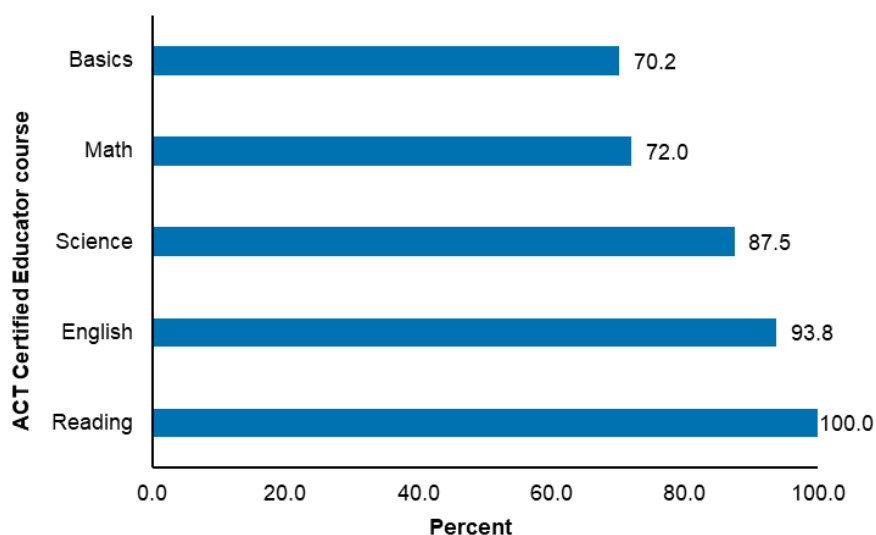
Additionally, six to eight months after taking the course and becoming ACT Certified, a majority of respondents indicated on the follow-up survey that the training from the courses had provided some value to their role as an educator (see Figure 5; average percentage across learning objectives ranged from 82.0% for Basics to 100.0% for Reading; results not provided for Writing because there were fewer than 10 respondents). Moreover, a relatively high percentage of respondents indicated that the training had influenced their teaching strategies and skills to some extent (average percentage across learning objectives ranged from 70.7% for Basics to 97.0% for Reading).<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 5.** Average Percentage Who Responded to the Follow-Up Survey That Course Learning Objectives Have Provided Some Value and Influence on Their Role as an Educator by Course



**Outcomes.** While the surveys generally focused on participants' reactions to the courses, participants were asked on the follow-up survey to indicate their level of agreement with a statement about whether becoming ACT Certified had given them enhanced professional credibility related to helping their students prepare for the specific ACT test section. As shown in Figure 6, a relatively high percentage of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement; the percentage ranged from 70.2% for Basics to 100.0% for Reading. Additionally, many respondents indicated that becoming ACT Certified in a subject-specific course provided them with specialized knowledge and competence that students, parents, and other educators recognized (data not shown; average percentage agreeing ranged from 66.0% in Math to 95.5% in Reading).

**Figure 6.** Percentage Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed to Experiencing Enhanced Professional Credibility Since Becoming an ACT Certified Educator by Course



## Conclusion

This study examined participants' reactions to the ACT Certified Educator program following its expansion to include Math, Reading, Science, and Writing courses. Collectively, the findings from the study suggest that participants' perceptions of the value and effectiveness of the program across the subject areas were generally positive. Consistent with results from our earlier study (Radunzel et al. 2019), responses to the current surveys suggest that participants have found the training and the topics covered in the courses to be valuable to their role as educators, and they have experienced enhanced professional credibility after becoming certified. Additionally, a majority of the participants indicated that they had learned new information from the program that would benefit their students.

The results also suggest that there is room for improvement as the program grows. For example, participants gave lower ratings of the degree of being engaged by the training for some courses such as Math. However, despite the lower ratings for the Math course, a majority of the participants found value in the course topics and learning objectives covered. For example, 75.9% of Math course participants indicated that the

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information covered related to the “understanding test structure and content” learning objective was very or moderately valuable to their role as a math educator.

A major limitation of the current study is that the findings of the follow-up survey—which was designed to learn more about whether the information from the training had influenced participants’ teaching strategies and skills—are based on relatively small sample sizes (at most 25 participants). Even though response rates were moderate for this survey, with a median of 38.4% over all the courses, the small number of program participants who earned ACT Certification between July 2019 and December 2019 limited the amount of survey data that could be collected. For example, we were unable to provide follow-up survey results for the Writing course because there were fewer than 10 respondents who completed the course and earned certification. In addition, administering the follow-up survey during the COVID-19 pandemic could have influenced the findings to some extent. For example, many of those who did respond indicated that although they found value with the program, it was difficult to comment on the outcomes they had experienced since becoming certified because of how COVID-19 has disrupted the education system.

Despite its limitations, this second follow-up study collected valuable information about the perceptions of ACT Certified Educator program participants that can be used to inform ways the courses and program may be improved to ensure achievement of the program goals, which include enhancing educators’ teaching strategies and skills and their ability to help their students learn and prepare for the ACT test. As participation in the ACT Certified Educator program continues to grow, ACT is committed to ensuring that the instructors are well qualified to teach the courses, that measures are in place to use the feedback received from participants to improve the course materials and the instruction received, and that more rigorous studies that collect student outcomes and contextual factors are conducted in the future to support the program.

## Appendix A

**Table A1.** Respondent Characteristics for the Basics, Math, and Science Courses

Characteristic	Basics		Math		Science	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	73	19.5	27	32.1	11	22.9
Female	301	80.5	57	67.9	37	77.1
<b>Highest degree earned</b>						
Bachelor's degree	127	33.8	33	39.3	14	29.2
Master's degree	216	57.4	47	56.0	29	60.4
PhD/JD/EdD	20	5.3	3	3.6	4	8.3
Other <sup>a</sup>	13	3.5	1	1.2	1	2.1
<b>Current occupation</b>						
Teacher	285	76.8	66	78.6	32	66.7
Tutor or instructional coach	19	5.1	9	10.7	7	14.6
Other <sup>b</sup>	68	18.3	9	10.7	9	18.8
<b>Number of years of</b>						
Teaching experience in subject	<i>n</i>	Average	<i>n</i>	Average	<i>n</i>	Average
Teaching experience in subject	371	14.9	85	12.1	49	9.4
Helping students to prepare for ACT section test	367	6.4	84	9.6	49	4.2

*Note.* The participant characteristics shown in the table were not available for those who did not respond to the survey. Percentages are based on those responding to the individual survey item.

<sup>a</sup> Other highest degree primarily includes those indicating Educational Specialist degree.

<sup>b</sup> Other occupation includes consultants, administrators, counselors, specialists, and testing coordinators.

**Table A2.** Respondent Characteristics for the English, Reading, and Writing Courses

Characteristic	English		Reading		Writing	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	8	11.4	10	16.9	4	20.0
Female	62	88.6	49	83.1	16	80.0
<b>Highest degree earned</b>						
Bachelor's degree	24	34.8	20	34.5	6	30.0
Master's degree	39	56.5	31	53.4	10	50.0
PhD/JD/EdD	4	5.8	5	8.6	4	20.0
Other <sup>a</sup>	2	2.9	2	3.4	0	0.0
<b>Current occupation</b>						
Teacher	52	74.3	30	51.7	11	55.0
Tutor or instructional coach	5	7.1	9	15.5	2	10.0
Other <sup>b</sup>	14	20.0	20	34.5	7	35.0
<b>Number of years of</b>						
	<i>n</i>	Average	<i>n</i>	Average	<i>n</i>	Average
Teaching experience in subject	70	12.1	59	11.6	15	10.5
Helping students to prepare for ACT section test	69	7.2	58	6.4	15	4.0

*Note.* The participant characteristics shown in the table were not available for those who did not respond to the survey. Percentages are based on those responding to the individual survey item.

<sup>a</sup> Other highest degree primarily includes those indicating Educational Specialist degree.

<sup>b</sup> Other occupation includes consultants, administrators, counselors, specialists, and testing coordinators.

## Notes

1. The word “educator” is used throughout this brief to describe the professionals who participate in the ACT Certified Educator program. According to material describing the program, participants may be educators looking to “elevate their teaching credentials and boost student success,” or they may be private tutors interested in “demonstrating mastery and enhancing their marketability” (see video at <https://pages2.act.org/act-certified-educator.html>).
2. The ACT Certified Educator program is currently offered only in the US. The previous study (Radunzel, Mattern, and Schiel 2019; see endnote 3) included both domestic and international program participants. To learn more about the ACT Certified Educator program and see a schedule of course offerings, visit [www.act.org/certifiededucator](http://www.act.org/certifiededucator).
3. J. Radunzel, K. Mattern, and J. Schiel, *Initial Efficacy Evidence for the ACT Certified Educator Program* (Iowa City, IA: ACT, 2019).

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4. D. L. Kirkpatrick, "Evaluation of Training," in *Training and Development Handbook: A Guide to Human Resource Development*, 2nd ed., ed. R. L. Craig (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 301–319.
  5. K. Mattern, *ACT's Efficacy Framework: Combining Learning, Measurement, and Navigation to Improve Learner Outcomes* (Iowa City, IA: ACT, 2019).
  6. The first set of individuals were invited to complete the follow-up surveys in February 2020—just before the program went on a three-month hiatus due to COVID-19. Individuals who took courses between January and March 2020 and then subsequently became certified were not asked to participate in the follow-up survey because of the extended time it would take to complete this study, as well as because of how the COVID-19 pandemic had affected education during this period. A few certified educators who had become instructors for the program were not sent the follow-up survey because of their increased involvement with the program.
  7. ACT continues to strive to improve the course materials and the instruction received based on the feedback received from course participants, including sharing feedback with the instructors and providing them with additional professional development.
  8. The majority responded *very valuable*, *moderately valuable*, or *slightly valuable*. The other possible response for the survey item was *not at all valuable*.
  9. The majority responded *very*, *moderately*, or *slightly* valuable or influential. The other possible response for the survey items was *not at all* valuable or influential.

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#### **Jeff Schiel, PhD**

Jeff Schiel, a member of ACT's applied research team, specializes in the design and methodology of surveys and survey sampling. His interests also include SAS programming and statistical graphics.

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