

Archived Information

The JASON Academy Project

The JASON Academy project's primary goal is to improve teachers' science content knowledge and help them become more effective teachers of science. The project provides teachers with online science content courses, emphasizing life, physical, and Earth sciences. It has developed new tools, activities, and strategies for teachers that will enhance their comfort level with new technologies and empower them to assist student investigations; a consistent approach and framework for all JASON curricula and materials, to allow teachers to move with ease into new science content from year to year and extend the approach into other disciplines; and (3) new learning modules and other resources.

The JASON Academy is being implemented with upper elementary and middle school science teachers (teachers of grades 4-9), and has served over 900 teachers since it began in Fall 2001. The Academy currently offers 12 five-week online courses in science content and pedagogy, which are used in accredited Masters degree programs and as part of re-certification programs for teachers. The courses feature interactive animations and graphics. The Academy is establishing partnerships with universities, school districts, and regional teacher centers to support scaling of course delivery. In certain cases, face-to-face interactions with Academy instructors are offered to produce a blended experience. The ongoing recruitment of teachers includes promotions by the National Science Teachers Association, special mailings to JASON Project teachers, and targeted email and mailings to district administrators.

SRI evaluated the JASON Academy project in the Fall of 2001. Its evaluation focused on the impact of the Academy courses on classroom practices, which reflected increased content knowledge and effective instructional strategies. The first phase of the evaluation was a two-year formative study in which the collected data was primarily used to improve the JASON Academy. The Academy plans to commission another evaluation phase that will be a summative process using the collected data to evaluate the effectiveness of the Academy in an effort to further improve course offerings.