

Abstract

Using TV411 at Home: A Pilot Test of Home View and Outreach Models

Jerome Johnston, Leslie Isler Petty, and Shannon Young
Institute for Social Research • University of Michigan
December, 2000

This study examined the use of TV411 in two groups: ABE adults viewing and studying at home alone and ABE adults studying at home with weekly help from a tutor. The study was a pilot test with two goals: (1) to gain preliminary evidence on the impact of home study on learner confidence, attitudes and knowledge and (2) to assess the feasibility of doing a larger scale study of distance learning with TV411.

The study lasted eight weeks. Twenty-three adults finished the study and received \$100 for their participation. Participants were asked to do the following each week: watch one video, do the exercises in the matching workbook, and maintain a portfolio of their work. Home view students worked independently or with a peer (e.g., family member or friend). Every week the tutor tried to contact each Outreach student by phone. This proved to be very difficult. Face-to-face tutorial support was also available for Outreach students several times a week. Though a few learners took advantage of this on a regular basis, most did not.

Overall, TV411 had a positive impact on attitudes, confidence and plans for future schooling, despite the limited amount of time learners spent engaging the materials—two hours per week on average for a total of 16 hours. TV411 had a very small impact on plans for engaging in the literacy behaviors promoted in the shows. Gains in the knowledge presented in TV411 were small. A previous study found greater gains when adults studied the same material in a group setting moderated by a facilitator. Learners were engaged in TV411 activities for 24 hours in that study.

There was a direct relationship between the amount of tutoring that a student received and his/her confidence and knowledge scores. From this research it appears that home study of TV411 has positive benefits. But it may be difficult to recruit ABE adults to watch at home. Once committed, ways need to be found to support their continued engagement of the materials and to provide them with tutorial help if they need it. Future research should focus on different ways to recruit and support ABE learners studying at home.