

Using TV411 in a Facilitated Group

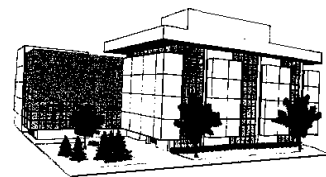
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*TV411—Multimedia Resources for Adult Literacy
from ALMA — the Adult Literacy Media Alliance*

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Abstract

Using TV411 in a Facilitated Group

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TV411 can be accessed by ABE adults in many ways, from watching and studying at home to engaging the materials as part of a course in a formal classroom. This study examines the use of TV411 in a Facilitated Group. In this model, a group of learners meet and study the TV411 materials on a regular basis. A facilitator helps the group engage the materials, helps individuals identify skills which they want to improve, and facilitates students helping each other develop those skills. The facilitator does not “teach” a curriculum in the traditional sense.

The goal of the study was to determine the type and size of impact possible with this delivery model. The study was divided into two parts. In the first part (Spring-Summer of 2000) four groups were recruited from the New York and Pittsburgh areas. Group meetings lasted two hours. Meetings were held twice a week for ten weeks, totaling 40 hours of meeting time. Forty-five ABE adults started the program; 37 stayed for the entire ten weeks.

In the second part (Winter of 2001) 37 participants were recruited from a group that had been denied admission to a GED prep program because their reading and math scores fell just below the cutoff levels. Participants were promised admission to the GED prep program if they completed an intensive version of a Facilitated Group program dubbed Prelude to Success. The students were divided into two groups that met much more frequently, but for the same total of 40 hours. Thirty-four completed the Prelude to Success program and enrolled in the GED prep program.

Taking all 71 participants together, the Facilitated Group experience had a positive impact on attitudes, confidence and educational plans. The TV411 shows and workbooks used in the test promote 24 literacy activities such as using a dictionary, writing in a diary, writing an essay, and figuring out everyday math problems ranging from estimating to calculating a percentage. Over the course of the 40 hours of meetings participants increased their expectations that they would engage in 17 of the 24 activities in the following week or month.

Each activity represents a skill—e.g., the ability to use a dictionary or estimate the total in a shopping cart. As a result of watching and practicing these skills in the Facilitated Group learners showed increased confidence that they could do the skills, with larger-than-average increases observed for confidence related to writing an essay, writing a letter to a business, writing a poem or song, using a thesaurus, changing a fraction to a percent, calculating an average, figuring out the price of an item on sale, and knowing what to include in a resume.

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Approximately half of the participants in the first field test changed their plans for the future to include enrolling in school some time in the six months following the test. Students in the Prelude to Success program were already committed to continuing their education. They were followed through their first semester in the regular GED prep program and their performance was compared with a matched set of controls and with all other students in the program. Prelude students were much less likely to drop out of school than the matched controls, and their grade point average was as good or better than the matched controls.

All participants were tested to see whether they learned the various facts and procedures presented in the videos and workbooks. Baseline knowledge scores were 68% for math and 72% for language concepts, and learning gains were six percent for math concepts and 16% for language concepts. Learning factual and procedural knowledge may be secondary to participants' changing their literacy interests and increasing their confidence. But these changed literacy interests may lead them to engage the books and related activities that will enhance their knowledge.

Students were also required to keep a portfolio of their work during the TV411 Facilitated Group. Portfolios varied widely in the quality and quantity of work they contained. On average, students completed 75% of the workbook activities and included an average of 15 workbook-inspired writing pieces in their portfolios. The majority of students were proud of their portfolio work and many indicated that it contained things they would not have done, or done as well, prior to the TV411 Facilitated Group.

The Facilitated Group shows great potential for enhancing the literacy life and educational attainment of ABE adults. But wider use of the model faces two challenges: (1) recruiting and retaining ABE adults to this non-traditional form of learning and (2) gaining acceptance for the primary outcome fostered by TV411: motivation for learning.

Large numbers of adults need the attitude adjustment and confidence building experience of a TV411 Facilitated Group before they will willingly choose to enroll in school. But current reimbursement formulas for traditional adult education providers do not recognize this goal. Greater acceptance of TV411 by traditional providers might be achieved by pairing the Facilitated Group with traditional instructional programs in ways similar to the Prelude to Success program.

Executive Summary

Using TV411 in a Facilitated Group

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October, 2001

TV411 is a unique set of materials for adult learners consisting of 20 half-hour television programs and companion workbooks that model and teach everyday literacy survival skills such as decoding difficult words, reading a map, writing a letter, estimating totals, and figuring out the cost of a sale item that has been marked down by a percentage. The series is designed for use in a variety of settings, ranging from traditional literacy programs to independent viewing in a home setting. This report describes the impact when the materials are used in a Facilitated Group. In this model, a group of learners meet and study the materials on a regular basis. A facilitator helps the group engage the materials, helps individuals identify skills they want to improve, and facilitates students helping each other develop those skills.

In the summer of 1999, the authors conducted a pilot study of the Facilitated Group model. The results were encouraging. After ten weeks of meeting weekly in a 3-hour session, many learners showed increased confidence in their academic skills. In addition, they learned many of the concepts taught in the series, were more inclined to engage in the literacy activities promoted by the series, and were motivated to pursue other educational opportunities after the intervention was over (Johnston, Young, & Petty, 1999). Based on this pilot study, a larger study of the effectiveness of the facilitated group model was undertaken. This report describes this effort and reports on the impact the experience had on participants.

Research Plan

The Facilitated Group model was tested in six groups between May, 2000 and June, 2001. Four groups were formed in Spring 2000, one each at the Bronx Educational Opportunity Center (EOC), the Brooklyn EOC, the Consortium for Worker Education (in New York City) and the Reemployment Transition Center (in Pittsburgh, PA). In this

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test, meeting time totaled forty hours. Participants met twice a week, two hours per meeting, for a total of ten weeks. Forty-five adults began the study; 37 completed the ten-week test. The research plan is summarized in the chart below.

Pretest	Intervention	Posttest
Baseline interviews & testing	Twice a week for 10 weeks, participants meet in a group with a facilitator. Each week they view a TV411 program, complete parts of the companion workbook, add to their portfolio, participate in group discussions and work in small groups on topics and skills they identify as personally important.	Follow-up interviews & testing

Two additional groups were held at the Brooklyn EOC in Winter 2001. These groups were part of a special test—called Prelude to Success—designed to assess the impact of a Facilitated Group on persistence and performance in a regular GED preparation program. Thirty-seven adults were identified who had applied to the GED preparation program for Winter of 2001, but were rejected because their TABE scores on either reading or math fell below the cutoff for admission to the program. They were presented with a special offer. If they agreed to study TV411 intensively for 2-1/2 weeks, they would be admitted to the next cycle of the GED prep program (Spring of 2001). These two groups met for three hours at a time, four days a week. Thirty-four students completed the Prelude program. The research plan for the Prelude groups was similar, but added another data collection point to obtain information on persistence and grades in the GED prep program.

Pre	Facilitated Group	Post	GED Prep Classes	Post-Post
Baseline interviews & testing	2-1/2 week intensive version of the Facilitated Group; same activities as above.	Follow-up interviews & testing	10-week semester of regular classes	Attrition and performance data from GED classes

TV411 is designed for adults over the age of 18 who are reading at approximately the sixth-eighth grade level. Most participants in the field test—both in the regular groups in the summer of 2000 and in the Prelude groups in Winter 2001—fell within these parameters. The average age was 36. Eighty percent had dropped out of school somewhere between fourth and twelfth grade. The remainder had a high school diploma,

either from the U.S. or from a foreign country. Most were women (60). More than half were single. All were lacking in the educational skills needed to improve their employment options.

In the Facilitated Group learners attended regular meetings where a facilitator helped them engage the materials and provided guidance when requested. In the course of every four-hour period participants watched one TV411 video, worked in the corresponding workbook, participated in small self-selected group activities where they worked on improving their skills and added writing and math items to their portfolio. The Facilitated Group itself became an element of the intervention along with the TV411 materials. The dynamics of the Facilitated Group are described in detail in the full report.

Impact of TV411

To assess the impact of the Facilitated Group experience, measures were developed that are tied to the developer's (ALMA) broad goals for learners and to the specific content of the ten videos and workbooks used in the studies. Each of the measures administered to the students was designed to tap the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes that are promoted in the videos and workbooks and explored in more depth in the Facilitated Group activities. Before and after the study participants were interviewed in a 45-minute face-to-face session. They also completed tests of mathematics and word skills. Prior to the intervention, students took reading tests to ensure their reading levels fell within the range for which the TV411 materials were designed—approximately grades 5-8. During the course of the Facilitated group, students took weekly pre- and post-test quizzes that measured learning of content specifically covered in the videos. In addition, participants were asked to maintain a portfolio—a collection of their TV411-related work—which was later examined for evidence of learning.

What impact did exposure to the TV411 videos and workbooks have on the participants? We assessed impact by looking at changes in the participants over the course of the Facilitated Group in five areas:

- Knowledge of the key math and “word work” concepts
- Writing skills and literacy engagement, as seen in their portfolios

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- Plans for engaging in the wide range of everyday literacy activities modeled on TV411 (e.g., write a letter, use a dictionary, read a book, make a budget)
- Confidence that they could perform these literacy activities competently
- Plans for further education

Knowledge of the key math and “word work” concepts taught in the TV411 experience. Participants registered an average increase on the math assessment of only 6% over the ten weeks. They showed a modest improvement on three of the four subsections of the test (percents, averages, and using charts). On the fourth subsection—reading a pay stub—participants already knew the concepts taught on TV411. Students showed greater improvement on the “word work” assessment that examined several structural components of words and dictionary usage (prefixes, suffixes, synonyms, antonyms, and knowing how to use a dictionary). Average scores on this assessment increased 16% from pre- to post-testing. Students showed improvement on all subsections of this assessment. These gains are small but important.

From what elements of the Facilitated Group do participants learn the knowledge? In the interest of testing the contribution of just the videos, participants completed a quiz immediately after watching each video. (They completed a matching quiz several weeks before watching the video.) The average gains on these quizzes was modest, suggesting that while the videos play an important role in setting the agenda for learning and engaging the participants, the workbook and classroom-based activities are essential components as well.

Writing skills and literacy engagement as seen in student portfolios. Students were required to keep a portfolio of their work throughout the class. This included workbook activities, other work stimulated by the workbooks, and work the student chose to do based upon personal interest. In the post interviews students expressed a great deal of pride in their portfolios. Most reported that the portfolio contained items they either would never have done, or would not have done as well, were it not for their participation in the project.

The portfolios varied widely in the quantity and quality of work they contained. On average, students completed most (~75%) of the activities in workbooks. Many

portfolios included examples of their writing. Students occasionally did multiple drafts of their work. Looking across drafts, most of the changes reflected correction of minor grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Plans for engaging in the literacy activities modeled on TV411. At both the pretest and posttest interviews, participants were asked about their plans to engage in each of the 24 literacy activities promoted in TV411—activities such as using a dictionary, writing in a diary, writing an essay, and reading a book for pleasure. The question asked whether they planned to do the activity in the coming week or month. If participants indicated a higher likelihood of doing the activities after the TV411 experience, this would be an indication that participation changed their attitudes about doing the promoted activities—even changed their disposition toward the behaviors. There was a significant increase for 17 of the 24 activities, with several activities showing quite large increases. For example, 25-36% of the participants increased their expectation that they would—in the next week—look up a word in a dictionary or write in a diary and—in the next month—write a poem or an essay. The TV411 experience clearly affected the interests and attitudes of many participants.

Confidence in performing the modeled literacy activities. In the videos and workbooks TV411 promotes many literacy skills, including using a dictionary or thesaurus, writing or editing an essay, and calculating an average. It was reasonable that students might have learned—from the messages in the videos, from their own successes in the workbooks, or from succeeding at the activities for their portfolio—that they could do things better than they had thought originally. In other words, it was reasonable that they would become more confident that they could be skillful in these areas. This indeed happened. There was a small average increase in confidence across the set of promoted literacy skills, with notable increases in confidence related to writing an essay, writing a letter to a business, writing a poem or song, using a thesaurus, changing a fraction to a percent, calculating an average, figuring out the price of an item on sale, and knowing what to include in a resume.

Plans for further education. The Facilitated Group affected the educational plans of many of the participants. Consider first the 37 people in the groups that met in the Spring and Summer of 2000. Half of them had plans to continue their education prior to

their participation. The other half added education to their plans over the course of the project.

The 34 students in Project Succeed were already committed to enrolling in the GED prep program at Brooklyn EOC. The key question for this group is how they would perform once they were enrolled in the GED prep courses. At the end of a full semester (ten weeks) of courses their performance was quite remarkable. Comparisons were made with a matched set of students who were identical, except their reading and math scores had been just high enough to be admitted to the program as regular students (called matched controls). Comparisons were also made with all other students in the GED prep programs, most of whom had much higher scores on their reading and math than either the TV411 group or their matched controls. This group is called normal controls. In terms of attrition: 26% of the normal controls dropped out or failed by the end of the first semester. The equivalent numbers for the TV411 students was 36% and for matched controls 51%. In terms of grade point average, the groups were quite close: the normal controls had a final average of 80% across all their courses while the matched controls had 74% and the TV411 students 77%.¹ It was predicted that the TV411 students, with their lower reading and math skills, would have a lower GPA than the matched controls. Yet they did not. This is an important outcome.

Although the number of students in the test was small, the evidence supports the notion that a TV411 Facilitated Group not only gives adults more confidence that they will be able to handle traditional academic tasks, but actually prepares them to perform at a higher level than would be predicted.

Conclusions

The TV411 Facilitated Group model shows great potential for enhancing the literacy life and educational attainment of ABE adults. Its contribution to the educational success of marginal GED prep students is of particular note. This could make the Prelude model particularly attractive to agencies that offer formal training for the GED, but are experiencing high dropout rates from their program. The current reimbursement model

¹ The only statistically significant difference was between the matched controls and the normal controls.

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in adult education ties reimbursements to demonstrating that participants in a program improve their “educational functioning” by one level during the time they are in a program. The motivational gains found for the Facilitated Group experience alone are not likely to meet this criterion. But, when used as a preparatory experience for an existing academic program, the time period for demonstrating the impact can be broadened to run from the beginning of the Prelude program to the end of one or more semesters in a regular GED-prep program.

It will be harder to gain wide acceptance for the Facilitated Group model outside of the regular school setting. The experience of the research team suggests that recruitment to a stand-alone Facilitated Group is a big challenge. It was very difficult to persuade ABE adults to join a Facilitated Group, even with a financial incentive. While those who completed a Facilitated Group reported that they valued the experience very much, the benefits are not obvious until a person has experienced the Group for some time, perhaps 5-6 sessions. It may be useful to establish linkages with organizations (churches, social groups, unions) that have an interest in promoting the improvement of their members, and that can recommend the experience to their members.

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Chapter 1

A Plan for Studying the Impact of TV411

TV411 is a unique set of materials for adult learners, consisting of television programs and workbooks aimed at helping adults learn by showing them how other adults have succeeded in reading, writing and math and by providing a collection of interesting strategies to solve everyday literacy problems ranging from figuring out the meaning of unknown words to calculating a simple average. The workbook is an eye-catching magazine with exercises that are easy enough that almost any learner can experience success.

TV411 is designed to be used in a variety of settings, from traditional literacy programs to independent home study. The designers and underwriters of TV411 want to estimate the benefits of using TV411 in various forms of informal education. Previous research has examined three models that represent a continuum of external support for student learning:

- Home Use: Studying at home with minimal external support
- Outreach: Studying at home with the added support of a tutor who provides assistance and feedback as needed
- Facilitated Group: Studying in a group with other learners and a facilitator who provides some structure but does not teach per se. The facilitator's job is to get the participants to pursue topics in the materials that are of interest to them—not the facilitator.

Each of these models provides a mechanism through which adult learners can engage the TV411 materials. Pilot tests of all models suggest that students can learn skills and increase their confidence in literacy skills from working with the TV411 materials in each of these models, with the Facilitated Group showing the greatest impact on students. To gain a better sense of what is possible with a Facilitated Group, the present study was conducted examining a larger number of groups than the pilot test.

Research Design

The Facilitated Group field test took place over ten weeks. Each week participants attended two sessions, each two hours long. Based on the pilot test (Johnston, Young, and Petty, 1999), it was judged that adults could fully engage one unit (video, workbook, related portfolio activities and classroom interactions) in about four hours.

Given a ten-week field test, only ten of the existing 20 TV411 units (video and accompanying workbook) were used. ALMA and ISR conducted separate content analyses of the 20 units. Together they selected ten units that represent the range of topics covered in the series and—when taken together—have the best repeat factor. The repeat factor refers to the amount that topics and concepts are repeated, or reinforced in the collection of units. The units selected were 1- 4, 7-8, 13, 16, 17 and 20. In addition to viewing the videos and completing workbook activities, participants were asked to keep a portfolio of their literacy activities. The content of the videos, workbooks and portfolios are described in detail in the next chapter.

Figure 1.1 Design Schematic for the Facilitated Group Field Test

Pretest	Intervention	Posttest
Baseline interviews & testing	Twice a week for 10 weeks, participants meet in a group with a facilitator. Each week they view a TV411 program, complete parts of the companion workbook, add to their portfolio, participate in group discussions and work in small groups on topics and skills they identify as personally important.	Follow-up interviews & testing

To study the effects of the Facilitated Group a pre-post design with no control group was used. Each learner served as his/her own control. (While a control group is desirable from a scientific standpoint, it was deemed too costly for this study.) Before the first regular meeting of the Facilitated Group, and again after ten weeks, each participant engaged in a 45-minute face-to-face interview. As part of the interview participants completed two orally-administered tests on math and grammar topics covered in the videos and workbooks.

To disentangle the knowledge gained from merely watching the videos from knowledge gained from the workbooks and classroom discussion and interaction, brief quizzes were developed to assess knowledge of key concepts taught in each video. The pretest quiz was administered anywhere from 1-5 weeks prior to watching the video. The

posttest quiz was administered immediately after viewing the video, before the content could be discussed in the group.

In addition, participants were asked to maintain a portfolio of work completed either in response to assignments in the workbooks or chosen because it was of interest to the participant. Completed portfolios included brief reflective notes on each entry. The portfolio provided insight into students' interests and on the activities they engaged in over the ten weeks. The array of measures is summarized in the design chart on the next page.

Recruiting Sites

The Facilitated Group model was tested with six groups. Four of them operated in Spring and Summer of 2000. Two more were recruited in Winter of 2001. ALMA had established strong working relationships with many agencies in New York City and Pittsburgh and identified organizations in these cities that were interested in participating in the project. ISR staff then contacted the agencies to make the necessary arrangements. Participating sites were responsible for recruiting qualified participants, providing space for group sessions, identifying a facilitator for the group and providing modest administrative support. Sites were offered stipends of \$500 to help defray recruiting and administrative costs; the facilitators were paid a stipend directly by ISR. A total of six organizations, all located in urban areas, initially agreed to participate in the study:

- Educational Opportunity Center of Brooklyn,
- Educational Opportunity Center of the Bronx,
- Consortium for Worker Education (NYC),
- Goodwill of Pittsburgh,
- Reemployment Transition Center (Pittsburgh), and
- Focus on Renewal (Pittsburgh).

Figure 1.1 Facilitated Group Research Design

<i>Week # (2 classes/week)</i> <i>Show #</i>	Instruction									
	1 video & workbook/week + learner-defined instruction + facilitator & peer feedback									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	1	2	3	4	7	8	13	16	17	20
Pretest Interview: Interest & confidence in TV411-modeled literacy behaviors; pretest of 411 math & mechanics of writing concepts Reading Level Test (MBA)	Long Term Impact									Posttest Interview: Interest & confidence in TV411-modeled literacy behaviors; posttest of 411 math & mechanics of writing concepts
Shows 1-5 pretest (administered as part of the long arc pretest)	Short Term Impact Pre-post quizzes tailored to the content of each segment. Portfolio and weekly journal reporting literacy activity, reflections on portfolio & reactions to video content.									
Pay Stubs	1 post									
Apostrophes	2 post									
Prefixes	3 post									
Ambiguity	4 post									
Maps	5 post									
Reading Food Labels	6 pre 6 post									
Metaphors and Similes	7 pre 7 post									
Everyday calculations	8 pre 8 post									
Thesaurus	9 pre 9 post									
Probability	10 pre 10 post									

Recruiting Learners

Although the materials can be of interest to a wide range of adult learners, the primary audience for TV411 is narrowly defined. This definition drove the selection of learners for inclusion in the study. The selection criteria were: over the age 18, lacks a GED (a high school diploma was acceptable, if the students' reading level met study criteria), have not taken any college classes, is not currently enrolled in a literacy or pre-GED/GED program, reads at approximately the 5th – 9th grade level (as determined by a standardized reading test) and either a native English speaker or non-native speaker who comprehends English well enough to engage the educational materials. Because an earlier formative evaluation revealed no substantive differences in reaction to the materials by race or ethnicity, these characteristics were not included in the sample specifications.

In an attempt to minimize the demands placed upon the recruiting organizations, a multi-step recruiting process was implemented. The organizations identified potential candidates for the study. Interested people then called an ISR toll-free number and answered a series of screening questions to determine if they met study criteria. Qualified participants were invited to attend a commitment meeting where the study was explained in more detail, the facilitator was introduced and a reading test was administered to assure that participants were in the appropriate target audience for TV411. Interested students who met all criteria signed an agreement that described the mutual obligations of the participant and the researchers and scheduled a time for an interview with ISR staff prior to the first group session. The agreement specified the amount of the stipend they would receive if they attended all of the sessions. All three New York sites were able to recruit enough students to constitute Facilitated Groups. In Pittsburgh, recruitment was more problematic, and it was necessary to combine the few recruits from three agencies into one group, held at RTC. Participants in these first four groups were paid a stipend of \$150-\$200. To increase the sample size, and to test an emerging hypothesis about the Facilitated Group, two more groups were recruited at the EOC of Brooklyn in Winter, 2001. These participants were not given a stipend, but instead were promised admission into the regular GED program if they completed the TV411 Facilitated Group.

The Numbers

There was significant attrition at all phases of the project. In the first phase of the field test (Spring-Summer, 2000) 235 interested adults responded to ads; they called the toll-free number and passed the first screening. Ninety people came to a commitment meeting and signed an agreement indicating that they would participate if selected. For a combination of reasons—failure to meet the study requirements and disinterest after learning more about the project—only 70 completed the baseline interview. Another 10 dropped after attending the first class, leaving a starting group of 60. Another 23 failed to complete the minimum of 18 classes (out of 20), leaving 37 that completed the ten-week field test. This amounts to a loss of 39% (33/70). Those who completed the program were very enthusiastic about their experience. They also received \$170 - \$250 for completing the class.

Table 1.1 Site Descriptions and Yield

Site	# of Students Completing* the Study
Phase I: Spring-Summer 2000	
Bronx EOC. Part of the statewide system, affiliated with SUNY and CUNY; offers ABE and GED classes as well as college preparatory courses. Services offered to those with limited incomes.	7
CWE-Consortium for Worker Education. Educational organization for union employees; offers a variety of enrichment and career oriented programs	7
Brooklyn EOC Part of the statewide system, affiliated with SUNY and CUNY; offers ABE and GED classes as well as college preparatory courses. Services offered to those with limited incomes.	16
RTC-Re-employment Transition Center. Agency providing low income adults and welfare recipients with job training programs. Also offers some ABE programs.	7
Phase II: Winter 2001	
Brooklyn EOC (2 groups)	34
TOTAL	71

* Completion = attended 18 of 20 meetings of the group.

Because the number completing the field test was much lower than hoped for, additional sites were sought. At the same time, it was becoming clear to the researchers that the Facilitated Group might have a special role to play in preparing ABE students for

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the demands of more formal education. The Coordinator of Academic Affairs at Brooklyn EOC was interested in testing this hypothesis. She selected 48 applicants to the GED preparation program whose reading scores fell just below the cutoff for the school. She offered them the opportunity of being admitted to the regular GED classes if they would complete a 2-1/2-week intensive version of a TV411 Facilitated Group. Forty-seven accepted the offer, though 10 dropped after the first meeting of the Facilitated Group. Another three dropped before the last meeting, leaving a total of 34 students who completed the program and provided additional data on program effects. Table 1.1 provides information on the characteristics of each of the sites and the number of learners who completed the study.

Characteristics of the Participants

Characteristics of the learners are shown in Table 1.2. Of the 71 participants who completed 18 or more of the 20 meetings, 60 were women and 11 men. The average age was 36. More than half were single and more than half had no children at home. About one quarter were unemployed and had not held a job in the last year. Another 31% were unemployed, but did hold some kind of job in the last year. They were mostly poor; 41% reported annual incomes of less than \$5,000. Almost three-fourths had incomes of \$15,000 or less. Almost all of the participants had dropped out of school without earning a diploma. All but seven percent read at a level below ninth grade, as measured by the MBA test.

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Table 1.2 Characteristics of the Facilitated Group Sample

Characteristic	Category	Count	Percent
Total		71	100%
Reading Level: MBA	Grade 1.8 – 4.9	19	27
	Grade 5.0 – 6.5	27	38
	Grade 6.6 – 8.9	20	28
	Grade 9.0 – 16.7	5	7
Highest Grade in School (Self Report)	Grade 2-8	12	17
	Grade 9-10	29	41
	Grade 11-12	16	23
	H.S. Diploma (U.S.)	5	7
	H.S. Diploma (Not U.S.)	7	10
	< H.S. Diploma (Not U.S.)	2	3
Age	18-25	14	20
	26-35	17	24
	36-45	25	35
	46-59	15	21
Gender	Male	11	16
	Female	60	84
Marital Status	Single	40	57
	Married	20	29
	Separated, Divorced, Widowed	10	14
Children at Home	Yes	33	47
	No	38	53
Job Status within past year	Currently employed	29	41
	Not working, but had job within last year	22	31
	Volunteering or job training	3	4
	Not employed within last year	16	23
Yearly Income	<\$5,000	29	41
	\$5,001 - \$15,000	23	32
	\$15,001 - \$25,000	11	16
	>\$25,000	8	11

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The learners looked quite similar in each site. The participants at CWE were a little older, and had higher average MBA scores. The data are shown in Table 1.3

Table 1.3 Select Demographics by Site

Site	n	Males / Females	Average Age	Average MBA
EOC of the Bronx (NY)	7	1 / 6	32	5.9
CWE (NY)	7	0 / 7	41	7.0
EOC of Brooklyn 1 (NY)	16	1 / 15	38	5.5
RTC (PA)	7	2 / 34	33	6.5
EOC of Brooklyn 2 (NY)	34	7 / 27	36	6.4
TOTAL	71	11 / 60	36	6.3

Chapter 2

A Close-Up Look at a Facilitated Group

Prior to the intervention, researchers trained the facilitators to conduct the group sessions and use the TV411 materials as dictated by the study design. Because the pilot study suggested that the impact of the Facilitated Group was due to a combination of the TV411 materials and the group experience, it was important that facilitators fully understand their role.

Teaching vs. Facilitating

The most important concept covered in the training and subsequent discussion among researchers and facilitators was the difference between standard classroom-based teaching and facilitation. While a standard adult education classroom is typically teacher directed (Purcell-Gates, Degener and Jacobson, 1998), these groups were designed to take their direction from the TV411 materials and student interest. To this end, facilitators were asked to serve more as classroom managers and guides than as instructors. Whereas in traditional classroom settings, teachers plan instructional content and materials to support specific curricular goals, in this study, facilitators responded to participants' questions and interests on an almost ad hoc basis. This meant that the facilitators needed to be able to react quickly to participants' instructional needs and teach a variety of subjects in any given class period. Researchers and facilitators both recognized that facilitators would face a challenging instructional task in not preparing lessons in advance of class.

Typical Sessions

Each of the study groups in the Spring of 2000 met for two hours twice a week in traditional classrooms; the study groups in Winter 2001 met for three hours, four times a week. Each room had video equipment and a chalkboard on which the facilitator could record notes. Facilitators encouraged students to move the desks into a semi-circular or circular arrangement to promote communication among participants. This helped

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participants get to know one another and also made class discussions easier because participants could address each other more directly.

Group sessions tended to follow the study group protocol outlined below fairly closely. (The first week was a bit different, as students needed to become familiar with the format of the group, the facilitator and with each other.) Each TV411 unit was covered over the course of two 2-hour sessions. The first session focused primarily on the video and the second on the workbook and portfolio activities; both sessions included guidance from the facilitator and frequent interactions among participants.

The table below describes typical group meetings for the two sessions. Note the balance between materials- and learner-initiated as opposed to teacher-initiated instruction.

Figure 2.1 First Class of the Week

Activity	Time
Learners socialize, get out their portfolios, and identify topics they want to work on	15
Watch this week’s video. Facilitator lists video topics on board as they appear on the video.	30
Take quiz on the video, turn in a carbon copy of the quiz, then discuss answers with the facilitator and classmates.	10
BREAK	10
Discuss the video, identify topics on which the group would like more instruction and select one for today’s “mini-lesson” conducted by the facilitator.	20
Work in study groups by topic to extend the process of self-help	30
(optional.) Workbook for the week is introduced, but students do not work on the exercises until the next meeting of the group.	5

Sessions typically began with participants socializing, working independently, or working with the facilitator or a peer on portfolio and workbook activities. Facilitators often circulated during this part of the session, answering questions and chatting with participants. The first class of the week began with the facilitator showing that week’s video. The relaxed atmosphere of the sessions encouraged engagement with the videos. Participants frequently addressed comments to the characters on the videos, kept up running commentaries on the content and relevance of the segments to their own lives, called out answers to pop quizzes embedded in the videos, and attempted to solve

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problems as they were being explained on the screen. Rarely did participants appear disengaged. While the video was playing, the facilitator kept a running list of video topics on the blackboard for later reference. Thus, the videos were the stimulus that set the agenda for the group sessions, brought models of successful adult learners into the classroom and acted as a “jumping off point” for the facilitated group activities. The videos helped create the climate in which the facilitated group operated. Immediately after viewing, participants were tested on a topic from the videos. The quizzes typically consisted of four multiple-choice or fill-in questions. After collecting a carbon copy of the quiz, the facilitator reviewed each item, providing answers and clarifying questions. Participants also provided one another with test answers during this review, helping one another answer problems and understand solutions. The facilitators encouraged participation, often turning to the learners to provide possible answers and to decide which answers were correct. Many participants commented on the classroom environment, noting that no one made them feel stupid. “We all pulled together as one. Nobody was better than, or knowed more than the other. Everybody asked each other questions and we all answered each other’s questions. We all pulled together as one, everybody was united as one and that made me come more.”

Following a short break, participants were asked to identify topics from the video about which they would like to learn more. The facilitator recorded all the ideas on the chalkboard. The class then voted on which topic they wanted to learn more about and the facilitator presented an impromptu mini-lesson. For example, Video #7 includes a segment on averages. When students selected this as a topic of interest, the facilitator used the chalkboard to provide a lesson on how to calculate an average. She then made up a few practice problems, which students worked on either independently or in small groups.

After the mini-lesson the students formed study groups according to topics of interest. They worked on topics of common interest, using both the other participants and the facilitator as resources. At the beginning, this task proved challenging for many, although they gained skills in group interaction throughout the intervention. If there was time, the workbook for the week was introduced, but students usually did not work in the workbook until the second class of the week.

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The second class again began with students socializing, sharing concerns with the facilitator and helping each other. During this two-hour period, students worked on exercises of their own choosing in the workbook. They worked in pairs, small groups, or independently. The facilitator floated among the students, offering assistance and guidance where needed. However, students frequently used each other as resources. During this time, students could watch either all or part of the video again, though this was done infrequently. Following a break, the participants focused on portfolio activities for the last part of the class. They worked on activities suggested by the workbooks or activities they selected to help them meet their own learning goals. Again, the facilitator provided support, encouragement and direction to students.

Figure 2.2 Second Class of the Week

Activity	Time
Complete selected exercises in the workbook, working either independently or in small groups of students. Facilitator floats among students, offering assistance and direction where needed. Learners can view parts or all of video a second time, if they wish.	30 -40
BREAK	10 - 15
Move to portfolio activities that arise from the workbook or represent learning activities in each learner's goal area. Again, students may work either independently or with others.	60 - 70

The Development of Community

In an ideal learning environment, students feel a strong sense of community with their teacher and peers that in turn supports their learning. Over the course of the Facilitated Group field test, the facilitators worked to establish a sense of community and camaraderie among the participants. For many participants, taking part in the study involved returning to a classroom-like setting for the first time in many years, and their previous academic experiences had not been positive. They had not experienced a supportive environment where their ideas had been respected and where their classmates had similar academic skills. It was the facilitator's task to change the experience.

In the pilot test the facilitator's job was to insure that learners engaged all of the TV411 materials and had an opportunity to work with as many workbook and portfolio tasks as possible. The facilitator was to avoid teaching because we needed to see what the TV411 materials could do without help from the teacher. But this amounted to

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creating a classroom environment that was quite different. Instead of the teacher helping students learn what was required, the teacher was helping students figure out what they needed to learn and encouraging them to get help from their peers and from the facilitator to reach the goals they set for themselves. In other words, the facilitator was creating a community of learners.

But learners need to learn how to play a supportive role in a learning community. So the facilitator modeled appropriate classroom interactions that included participants respecting and supporting one another. They also set boundaries for appropriate behavior and helped participants learn how to interact with one another and with the TV411 materials. This modeling took place over time, as did the development of learning communities.

As a result of the facilitators' expertise in fostering learning communities, the classroom environments were fairly relaxed and participants were encouraged to dialogue with facilitators and with one another. Many participants later linked changes in their beliefs and attitudes about education to their experiences getting to know and work with their facilitator and peers. Some noted that this was the first time they had been in a classroom setting in which everyone else had had similar educational experiences and where participants supported one another's learning. Thus, the supportive group environment became a fourth element—along with the videos, workbooks and portfolios—in this intervention. There was almost a symbiotic relationship between the TV411 materials and the facilitated group: both were essential to the program and each brought a unique element to it. The TV411 materials opened students' eyes to new possibilities in learning and new ways in which to view their own potential; the facilitated group provided the environment in which these newfound ideas could flourish. This inter-connectedness of the group model and the TV411 materials was evident in the way the students talked about TV411 in their interviews: it was clear that they were referring to the *entire experience* (the classes, the facilitator, their classmates and the TV411 materials) simply as TV411. To the students, the components were inseparable parts of a unique educational experience.

Over the course of the ten weeks, many friendships developed. In their follow-up interviews, participants frequently commented on the strong sense of community, their

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comfort in that type of learning environment, and how much they were able to learn from their classmates. One participant noted,

...any time we come, we discuss it and they were all relaxed to discuss everything. Sometimes somebody's very good at something like math, they were very good and I was also good in English. Like sometimes when something comes that is very hard and I say I think this should be the answer and we discuss it and we know it has really helped us. Because we were working together even though we were not cheating, but I think there was cooperation in the school, yes.

Henri (not his real name), a student at the Brooklyn EOC, was profoundly affected by the experience. A non-native English speaker, Henri was quite nervous about taking the class and particularly about speaking up in the group. When he discovered that he would be the only male in a class of 16 students, he tried to leave. The teacher and several of the other students encouraged him to stay and he reluctantly agreed. Over the course of the intervention, Henri and his classmates formed strong, supportive bonds and Henri became more willing to speak out in class. He noted, "When I first started here, I felt like a stranger, but now I feel like I'm part of a family." He used the TV411 materials to improve his writing skills, often presenting his work to the class for feedback.

On the last day of class, Henri asked to read a poem that he had written that expressed his feelings about the class. The sentiments and the beauty of his language moved many to tears.

The day has come my dear
To be a part
Our god father TV411
Will say good by to us.

But don't forget we are not divided
I will remember you and you will
Remember me too.

From our eyes ther is always love,
because we are part of a tree, who
Will always be there.
Well what about the branches.

Give me a phone call this week
I will call you next week
Talk to me about TV411

I will remember Ms. D
Remind me about Michael
I will remember Ms. B

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Talk to me about TV411
I will remember Mr. Johnson

The day is not yet over,
I start missing you
Oh oh oh! My dear! Sisters I will missing you.

I will remember Dr. Johnson and his staff
The day is not yet over, and I' am starting to miss you
Oh oh my dear sisters I will miss you

Chapter 3

Modeling the Facilitated Group Intervention

What might learners gain from engaging TV411 materials in a Facilitated Group? The range of possible outcomes was derived from an examination of ALMA's goals, a content analysis of the TV411 materials, and an analysis of the key elements of the Facilitated Group itself.

TV411 Goals

What is TV411 trying to accomplish? The *TV411 Teacher's Guide* provides these statements (ALMA, 1999).

“Our goal is to *incite* viewers to engage in literacy practices more frequently by creating opportunities, rewards and visibility for doing so.” (page 11, emphasis added)

“By explaining and demonstrating the skills, strategies and literacy practices involved in these kinds of activities, the program provides learners with tools to *increase their effectiveness* as readers, writers and math-users in everyday situations.” (page 4, emphasis added)

“The curriculum models, explains and provides opportunities to practice how to:” (page 18)

- read to complete an action; read for information; read for pleasure; read for enrichment or inspiration; and read to learn new words
- write to get something done, write as social communication, write for yourself; and learn to proofread and edit your writing.
- improve skills in solving “how much” math problems; comparison problems; and assessing chances problems.

The TV411 Curriculum

The TV411 curriculum is designed to be an integrated, two-part intervention comprised of videos and workbooks. A third element, developing a portfolio of one's

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literacy work, is encouraged in the workbooks and in the *TV411 Users' Guide*. Ideally, learners view the videos on a regular basis, complete various workbook activities that spark their interest, and maintain a portfolio of literacy and life-skill tasks on an ongoing basis. The videos and workbooks are structured in a magazine format. This format is modeled after popular television programs and advertisements. Segments run from 22 seconds to just under six minutes. The series has recurring characters (e.g., Question Man, who asks for information from people as diverse as a toll collector and a meter reader; and Laverne, a helpful sales clerk who explains literacy tasks common to store settings such as how to figure the best deal in a product promotion) and recurring segments (e.g., Milestones, which profile adults who have achieved an education against great odds; Buzzwords, which teaches new vocabulary words; Dictionary Cinema in which viewers learn to use a dictionary and, Sports Smarts in which math concepts are presented). The basic skills are presented in the context of real-life situations that are likely to be relevant and interesting to adult learners (see the *TV411 Teacher's Guide* for a fuller description of the ALMA curriculum and program content). Each video and corresponding workbook covers multiple topics. This strategy reflects a sampling approach in which learning is expected to occur based on viewers' individual needs. It is not anticipated that every viewer will engage all of the ideas in each segment or workbook.

The TV411 curriculum also presents information on specific skills (e.g., subject-verb agreement, how to figure out a percentage, how to use a thesaurus). It stresses attitudes and beliefs about learning, working from the premise that all adults are life-long learners. It hopes to provide adult learners with strategies they can use to solve everyday literacy problems. It also hopes to persuade viewers to continue their education, either informally or formally.

To meet these curricular goals, TV411 utilizes two instructional methods: direct instruction and modeling. The direct instruction component is used for teaching factual and procedural knowledge. In this type of instruction, students are provided with definitional and/or factual knowledge and are taught in a step-by-step manner how to apply that knowledge. For example, students are taught what a thesaurus is and how to use it; they are also taught what a mathematical average is and how to calculate it. There

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is direct instruction in both the video and workbook; the workbook provides opportunities to apply knowledge as well.

Modeling involves having a character in the video perform a behavior and be rewarded for it. The character must be someone with whom the viewer can identify by virtue of some shared or admired characteristic, such as similarity of features or circumstances. The reward can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Milestones feature mini-documentaries of adults successfully reaching their goals by furthering their education. Adult viewers who dropped out of school and are still reading at a sixth-grade level can easily identify with real-life adult learners such as Dallas Farmer. Dallas is a self-taught auto mechanic in his mid 40s. He is hindered as an auto mechanic by his inability to read repair manuals. In addition, he is concerned that his 11-year-old son may be following in his footsteps and not learning to read. So he finds a tutor, learns how to read, and saves his auto repair business. His son responds to the model of his father and learns how to read as well. Dallas is rewarded in many ways for his efforts.

Another Milestone character, Sheila Greene, is unemployed. She discovers she lacks the reading scores necessary to qualify for the travel agent job she so badly wants. Determined to qualify for the next training class for travel agents, Sheila contacts a local literacy center and begins to build activities into her day that will increase her literacy skills. For example, she begins to read a newspaper every day. As she reads the newspaper, she circles unfamiliar words and later looks them up in a dictionary. Sheila also discusses the importance of setting aside a special place and time each day to work on her reading skills. Sheila has the potential to serve as both a general inspiration for other adults to further their education, and as a model for specific strategies that could help any adult learner cope with reading and study problems.

Workbooks

Many of the activities contained in the workbooks are either reflections or extensions of video segments. For example, in the Sports Smarts segment in Video #2, viewers are introduced to the concept of percentages. The accompanying workbook then provides a hands-on exercise calculating percentages, changing decimals into percentages, and rounding numbers. Workbooks are intended to serve as a companion to the videos. However, concepts presented in a particular video may or may not be

covered in the corresponding workbook. ALMA's intent was for the workbooks and videos to complement each other, but also for each to be able to stand alone. Each workbook follows a consistent format. Writing activities are predominantly focused on personal writing and are recommended for inclusion in an individual user's portfolio. Workbook exercises also focus on building readers' grammar, punctuation, and spelling skills.

Portfolios

A learner's portfolio has always been a central feature of the TV411 curriculum. In the TV411 *User's Guide*, ALMA suggests the portfolio—along with the TV shows and the workbooks—comprise the three critical elements of the TV411 learning approach. The *User's Guide* suggests learners use portfolios for dual purposes: (1) to organize and store their TV411-related work and (2) as a means of reflecting upon their work and gauging their progress. The *User's Guide* provides basic instructions on setting up and using a portfolio. In addition, throughout the workbooks, learners are instructed—“save this to your portfolio.” No additional support or explanation for portfolio usage is provided in the TV411 materials.

In the field test the concept of portfolios was introduced to students in the commitment meetings. The facilitators provided additional instruction and encouragement for students to use the portfolios. In the early meetings of the group the portfolio was described to participants as a folder where they would keep all of their writing and study activities. It was also noted that students might review the contents of the portfolio over the course of the project to see how their work changed. Midway through the field study participants were asked to review each piece in their portfolio and attach a special cover note. The cover note asked participants to provide the following information: a description of what the entry was, when they worked on it, and whether the idea for the work came from the workbook or another source. The notes had a two-fold purpose: they encouraged learners to reflect upon the work included in their portfolio and they provided the researchers with information useful in analyzing portfolio content.

A quantitative analysis of the portfolios revealed the amount and type of work students placed in their portfolios. Each item in a portfolio was assigned to one of three categories:

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- *Workbook activities*: these were activities completed within the workbooks themselves. All possible activities within one workbook section (e.g., all exercises in a “How To” article) were counted as one activity. Only activities in which the student had done most or all of the work were counted.

- *Workbook-inspired activities*: this category encompassed activities presented in the workbooks but requiring work—usually writing—outside the pages of the workbook. For example, in Workbook # 1, the Good Reading/Good Writing section focuses on the songs of singer-songwriter Michael Franti. After an article that talks about how Franti used emotions in his songs, students are asked to “write about how you express your love for – or caring about – a person.” Suggestions are offered for writing either a poem or a narrative, and students are told to “save it for your portfolio.” In another workbook (#13), students are presented with models of three different types of business letters. They are then instructed to practice writing each type of letter and to “save the letters for your portfolio.”

- *Unique activities*: these were activities not prompted by the workbook. Whenever possible, the distinction between workbook-inspired and unique activities was made by the students themselves on the cover sheets they attached to portfolio contents. If the assignment was labeled on the cover note as a unique activity, it was counted as such. If no cover note was attached to the assignment, an analyst familiar with the workbook assignments made a judgment

Though the portfolios varied in size, for most students the portfolio was quite a large file, and it was viewed with pride by almost all of them. Table 3.1 summarizes the contents by category.

Table 3.1 Portfolio Contents by Type

Activity	Average	Range
Workbook Exercises (51 possible)	38 / 75%*	16–51
Entries Not in the Workbook		
Workbook-Inspired	15	2–31
Unrelated to the Workbook	2	0–14

* Percent of the 51 total activities possible

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On average, participants completed three-fourths of the workbook exercises. In addition, their portfolios contained an average of 15 workbook-inspired activities (typically writing activities) but just a few unique activities. While the number of items contained in a portfolio provides only limited insight into how students used portfolios, these numbers demonstrate that the facilitated group participants completed a great deal of work during the course of the project.

An examination of portfolios across sites revealed some interesting differences. Table 3.2 shows the average number of each type of portfolio entry at each of the five facilitated group sites.

Table 3.2 Average Portfolio Counts by Site

	Workbook Exercises	Workbook -Inspired Entries	Unique Entries	Total Portfolio Count
Brooklyn S2000	40	17	2	59
Brooklyn W2001	38	15	2	55
CWE	44	12	2	58
Bronx	44	24	4	70
RTC	22	5	1	28
AVERAGE	38	15	2	55

There is a significant difference in overall portfolio size across sites. Learners at the Bronx EOC produced the largest portfolios, while those at RTC site had significantly fewer items in their portfolios. It is unclear how much this is a function of the skills and predilections of the particular learners versus the direction provided by the facilitator. Classroom visits indicated that while all facilitators adhered to the study guidelines, each brought a somewhat different approach to her class. These differences may be as straightforward as the facilitator reminding students to put things in their portfolio, or they may be more subtle differences in interaction styles. For example, at the Brooklyn 2001 site, the facilitator used a more hands-off approach, allowing students to learn from the videos and workbooks on a more independent basis. These learners produced a diverse set of portfolios, ranging from exceptional to well below average in size and content. Future research should examine how facilitation relates to portfolio development.

Content Analysis of TV411

Prior to developing the measurement for this pilot study, researchers conducted a content analysis of the TV411 materials to categorize the instructional, motivational, and behavioral elements of the curriculum. The chart below summarizes the analysis. ALMA also conducted a content analysis. Both were used to determine show selection and guide measurement development.

The shows included in the study reflect the range of topics presented in TV411. The primary focus of the shows was on reading, writing, and math skills. However, in keeping with the TV411 approach, these topics were presented in real-life contexts. The selection of content is not designed to promote mastery of a specific area.

Figure 3.1 Examples of TV411 Content Categories

Category	Description (examples only, not a complete listing)
<i>Math and Finances</i>	Math (percents, averages); Personal Finances (understanding a pay stub, setting up a family budget)
<i>Genres and Literacy Resources</i>	Introduction to genres and types of texts: content, structure, and use (poems, short stories, memoirs, etc.); literacy resources and how to access them (library use, reference books); use of texts and parts of texts (e.g., understanding how to use a table of contents or index)
<i>Reading Behaviors and Strategies for Engaging Texts</i>	Using context clues to figure out word meanings; circling or underlining unfamiliar words; using a dictionary or thesaurus; comprehension
<i>Writing Behaviors and Strategies for Creating Texts</i>	Freewriting, writing first drafts, editing, etc.
<i>Writing as Social, Business, or Personal Communication</i>	Greeting cards; business and complaint letters, memos, and messages; journal writing, personal letters, songs, poems
<i>Mechanics of Writing</i>	Spelling, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, etc.
<i>Life Skills</i>	Family and self development; medical/Health; finance; job related skills
<i>Reading and Vocabulary</i>	Vocabulary; using context to understand words; synonyms and antonyms; prefixes and suffixes; compound words
<i>Modeling of Literacy Behaviors, Strategies and Successes</i>	<i>Milestones</i> episodes of adult learners' successes and strategies for learning, student writers. <i>Reflections</i> segments about reading and writing strategies.

The content analysis reflects the nature of the TV411 curriculum, which includes both learning specific skills and learning how to be an independent learner. The

curricular approach is iterative, rather than sequential, in nature. Thus, one concept may be presented in different ways in several segments and it is not necessary to see all related segments, or to view them in any particular sequence, to learn the material presented. This type of curriculum is appealing to an audience that has typically shunned school after failing repeatedly in textbook-based courses that emphasize mastery of extensive interrelated facts and procedures. Thus, the TV411 approach may provide adults with the confidence and skills needed to continue their education. The flip side of this, however, is that this curriculum does not equate to mastering a content *area* in the way that is required to succeed at high-stakes tests such as the GED. To reflect the focus of the TV411 curriculum, the evaluation assessed learners' attitudes and confidence in addition to knowledge gains.

The Dynamics of a Facilitated Group

In the pilot test the Facilitated Group was devised as a device to isolate the effects of the TV411 materials while insuring that learners engaged all of the materials (Johnston, Young, and Petty, 1999). The facilitator could not teach (except to respond to queries from students for explanations) and had to encourage groups of students with similar interests (improving their writing or practicing their math) to study together. This design had an unanticipated consequence. In the course of the research it became clear that the Facilitated Group gave a particular character to the intervention, and in fact, became a key component of the intervention.

Almost all of the people in the target audience for TV411 have a history of failure in traditional school settings. In school, a teacher is charged with delivering a curriculum, telling students what they need to know, and assessing their performance against the standards of the curriculum. In this context, these adults have rarely measured up. Typically, they project their failure onto the teacher, abdicating responsibility for solving their academic problem.

In the Facilitated Group the facilitator has no responsibility for the “curriculum”—for covering particular content with the students. Observation suggests that this has an interesting effect on students sometime around the fourth or fifth meeting. They begin to accept responsibility for their own education. They identify skills that they need to learn, reveal some of their weaknesses, and ask for help from the facilitator and from

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other group members. When asked if there were specific things that were learned from the teacher, one perceptive student commented, “Very little, because the class was about how to learn from other things besides the teacher. The teacher was there to guide you, not to teach you.” While some students were at first uncomfortable with this concept, most grew to value their own (supported) independence as learners and their ability to be resources for their classmates. “I would say the teachers were very great. They were very patient and they didn’t put pressure on you. I liked working in groups. It made me more relaxed. I learned from the other students, too. I surprised myself that I knew things that they needed to know, too. That’s a great way of teaching.”

The Facilitated Group also provides an opportunity for students to begin to apply some of the knowledge and skills they obtained in ways that can impact their lives. Tamisha (not her real name), a student in the Bronx class, provides an example of this. Tamisha made beautiful baby blankets, and was offering to make them for others if they covered the cost of the yarn. The facilitator, drawing on the TV411 segment in which Laverne helps a painter estimate all of the costs of doing a job – including his labor – suggests that Tamisha reconsider her approach to making blankets for others. Working in the class, with the assistance of her classmates and the facilitator, Tamisha is able to come up with a cost for the blankets that places a value on her time. She becomes more confident, more involved in the class and produces an impressive portfolio of her work

Having observed this, it is clear that the Facilitated Group experience itself is part of the intervention. But there is a symbiotic relationship between the TV411 materials and the group experience. The videos stimulate ideas that—in the comfort of the facilitated group—learners feel free to discuss. The workbook presents tasks that are easy enough that everyone experiences some success, so learners are willing to ask for help with the tasks they don’t quite understand. As the sense of safety grows, students become more willing to ask for help in other areas, such as figuring a sum or product, or writing a letter that is clear and persuasive. The researchers observed that this opening up is a product of a good facilitator seeing the windows of opportunity and encouraging learners to share, with suggestions such as “why don’t you see if others in the group would be persuaded by what you wrote?” But a facilitator would not take this tack if

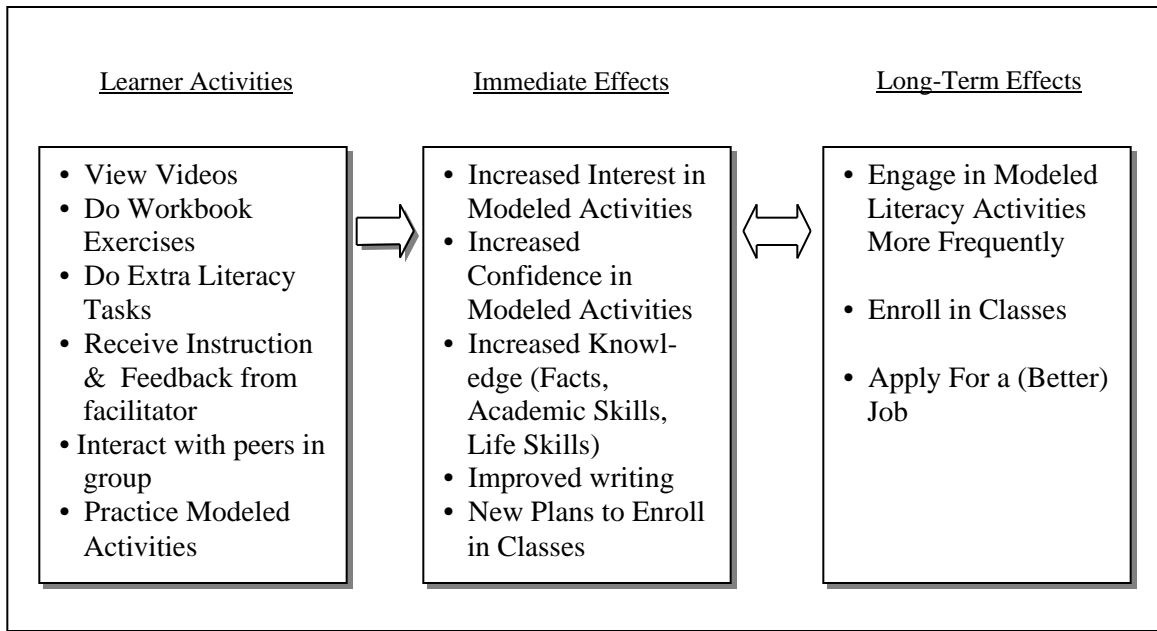
they were not instructed to do so, and if they had responsibility for getting their students to achieve mastery of a large body of facts and procedures in the ten-week period.

When the learners in this study respond to the questions about TV411, they are responding to having used the materials in a particular context that goes beyond the materials themselves.

A Model of Facilitated Group Effects

Given this analysis of the TV411 materials and learning setting, we propose the model of effects shown in the diagram below.

Figure 3.2 Causal Model of TV411 Effects



Immediate Effects

Five measurement categories were selected following well-established theories on the effects of video- and print-based interventions similar to TV411. (See, for example, Johnston and Ettema, 1980, 1986; and Rogers and Storey, 1987.)

Interest. In the course of the 10 weeks, participants see and hear pro-literacy messages on the videos, in the print, and from peers in the group. This can lead to increased interest in engaging in these activities.

Confidence. In the course of the 10 weeks, participants read many new things, practice their writing, and try math problems they formerly thought were too difficult. As

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a result of succeeding at these tasks, participants' confidence in performing these tasks should increase.

Knowledge and Skill. Both the videos and workbooks provide direct instruction on a wide variety of topics in the areas of writing, reading, and life skills, as well as vocabulary. The workbook provides a chance to practice some of these skills. In addition, during the group sessions, the facilitator provides direct instruction on topics of interest to participants and students have the opportunity to help each other build skills.

Writing Skills. Participants are encouraged to practice their writing, secure feedback, and revise their text.

Educational Plans. Viewing stories of adults who have overcome obstacles and gotten an education, coupled with their own success with TV411 tasks, could result in participants gaining the confidence in their school-skills and make plans to go back to school.

A collection of pre-post measures were developed in each of these five areas. The particular measures are discussed in more detail in the following chapters that describe the impact in each of these areas.

Long-Term Effects

There are several long-term outcomes that ALMA would like to see realized in learners. These include engaging regularly in modeled literacy activities (writing a poem, reading a book), enrolling in school, and getting better employment. But the attainment of these outcomes is beyond TV411's responsibility. They require too many other factors beyond TV411. For example, during the ten-week experiment learners may develop plans for returning to school. But realizing this plan requires that a class be offered in a convenient location and that the learner has the necessary fees and free time. So it would not be appropriate to use these long-term outcomes as measures of TV411's value.

Chapter 4

Impact on Knowledge and Skills

This chapter explores students' long-term and short-term learning of the specific skills presented in the TV411 materials. The long term measures were designed to reflect the content of the TV411 materials and to measure learning that occurred from viewing the videotapes, working in the workbooks and participating in the facilitated group. The short term measures were tailored specifically to content presented in the TV411 videotapes and were designed to examine what learning occurs from a single viewing of the videotape, without further discussion, practice or instruction. No differences based upon study site or student reading level were observed; therefore all data are reported for the total sample.

Knowledge of Concepts Taught on TV411: Long-Term Impact

The content analysis identified the most prominent facts and skills taught in the shows and workbooks. A multiple-choice, short-answer test was constructed to measure knowledge of these concepts. This test had two components. One part focused on the mathematical concepts presented in TV411. The second component was the “word work” assessment, which examined several structural components of words as well as dictionary usage. Participants completed these tests both before they started the intervention and again at its completion.

The mathematics content in these ten shows is quite small. There are four concepts: numeric literacy as represented by a video segment and workbook exercise on understanding the various entries on a paycheck stub, how to calculate an average and a percentage and how to read a chart. Table 4.1 presents the results of the pre- and post-test math assessments. At the time of the pretest participants got 72% of the test items correct; at the posttest they got 78% correct.

Participants showed a modest improvement on all sub-sections of the math skills assessment, with the exception of the numeric literacy section, which had no room for improvement. This section focused on reading a pay stub. Although our previous work

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had indicated that most students could easily handle this task, it was intentionally included because it was a math literacy skill included in TV411 and because it was a non-threatening way to begin the math assessment.

Table 4.1 Long Term Math Results

	Pretest (% Correct)	Posttest (% Correct)	Difference	Sig.*
TOTAL SCORE (28 items)	72%	78%	5.4%	0.000
SUBSCALES				
Numeric Literacy (5 items)	99%	99%	-0.28%	0.708
Percents (14 items)	66%	72%	6.35%	0.001
Averages (3 items)	50%	56%	6.09%	0.081
Charts (6 items)	74%	79%	5.64%	0.012

* Paired Comparison T-Test.

Did the TV411 Facilitated Group experience have a different impact on students depending upon the level of math skill they had when entering the program? Additional analyses were conducted to explore this possibility. Students were divided into three groups – low, medium and high - based upon their baseline math scores. Table 4.2 shows the results. Overall, there is no significant difference in the amount of math gains made by students in the various ability groups, however, those with low or medium baseline scores did show somewhat greater gains than did students with the highest baseline test scores.

Table 4.2 Gains in Math Scores Based on Baseline Test Scores

Group Assignment	N	Average Pretest Score	Average Post Test Score	Difference
Low	16	57%	63.4%	6.7%
Medium	29	69%	76.5%	7.5%
High	22	87%	88.8%	1.8%

The second content area includes several structural aspects of words, including prefixes and suffixes, synonyms and antonyms. In the TV411 videos these are presented in the context of explaining how to decode words. One other topic is how to use a dictionary. Nineteen test items were developed to assess knowledge of these topics.

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The test results are shown in Table 4.3. At the baseline, participants' total scores averaged 68%. On the posttest the total score averaged 84%, a 16% increase. Students showed significant improvement on all of the individual components of the test. The largest improvements were noted for suffixes and dictionary usage.

Table 4.3 Long Term Word Work Results

	Pretest (% Correct)	Posttest (% Correct)	Difference	Sig.*
Total Score (19 items)	68%	84%	16%	0.000
SUBSCALES				
Prefixes (4 items)	77%	91%	14.4%	0.000
Suffixes (4 items)	67%	86%	19.0%	0.000
Synonyms (3 items)	70%	82%	12.2%	0.000
Antonyms (3 items)	68%	83%	15.4%	0.000
Using a Dictionary (5 items)	62%	79%	17.5%	0.000

* Paired Comparison T-Test.

Thus, participants demonstrated improvement in the specific math and word work skills covered in the TV411 Facilitated Group. This likely reflects the impact of the TV411 materials used in conjunction with the facilitated group experience.

In addition, Table 4.4 shows that students starting the TV411 Facilitated Group with lower initial baseline scores on the Word Work test showed the greatest increases on the posttest. Students with pretest scores in the low or medium range showed larger increases on the Word Work assessment than did those students whose baseline scores fell in the high range. The increases look large, but must be considered in light of the fact that the assessment looked at a very limited set of skills tied closely to TV411 content. Thus, within this tightly defined framework, the data suggest that those most in need learned the most.

Table 4.4 Gains in Word Work Scores Based on Baseline Test Scores

Group Assignment	N	Average Pretest Score	Average Post Test Score	Difference
Low	20	47%	72.4%	25.4%
Medium	23	67%	87.1%	20.1%
High	28	84%	90%	6.0%

Knowledge of Concepts Taught on TV411: Short Term Impact

In order to examine short term learning from the video alone, students completed short (four question) tests focused on one concept covered in each video on a pre- and post-test basis. The pre-test versions were called “Brainteasers” and were administered at least one week prior to viewing the video in which that content was covered. The post-test versions, called “Quizzes” were administered immediately after viewing the video, before any classroom discussion or instruction occurred. Table 4.5 shows the mean scores for the Brainteasers and Quizzes.

Table 4.5 Short Term Learning Directly from the Videos

Content Area	Pretest	Posttest	Difference	Sig.*
Probability	2.59	3.47	0.88	.007
Calculations	3.13	3.55	0.42	.000
Math Average	2.86	3.51	0.65	
Apostrophes	2.73	2.91	0.18	.004
Thesaurus	2.48	3.02	0.54	.019
Prefixes	3.27	3.52	0.25	.181
Metaphors-Similes	2.35	2.76	0.41	.154
Ambiguity	1.36	1.85	0.49	.548
Read Food Labels	3.59	3.64	0.06	.465
Word Average	2.63	2.95	0.32	
Maps	3.05	2.34	-0.71	.030
Overall Short Term Average	2.68	3.08		

* Paired Comparison T-Test.

These scores are presented as means, rather than as percents, because of the small number of items in each test. When the number of items is this small, it only takes one additional correct answer to make a major change in the percent of correct items. For example, two items correct on a 4-item test yields a 50% correct rate, while three correct items jumps the percent correct to 75%. This suggests a larger effect than is actually

present. Thus, the mean scores present a more accurate representation of the amount of change actually demonstrated by the participants.

In math there was a significant increase in the average score on the probability quiz—from 2.59 to 3.47, the largest increase for any of the quizzes. This means that at the pretest learners averaged 2-1/2 items correct; right after the video they averaged 3-1/2 items correct. There was a smaller (but still statistically significant) increase for the calculations topic. Viewers knew 3 out of 4 answers at the time of the baseline quiz; they improved their knowledge about one-half answer.

The language skills quizzes covered six topics: apostrophes, prefixes, ambiguity, food labels, metaphors, similes and the use of the thesaurus. There were statistically significant increases in only two of the content areas: apostrophes (.18 items) and use of a thesaurus (0.54 items). For map reading, viewers' scores actually declined from baseline to follow-up quiz. Thus, while students do appear to gain a little bit of knowledge from simply viewing the video, more complete learning requires further discussion and instruction that takes place the Facilitated Group environment, coupled with practice opportunities in the workbook.

Both the long-term and short-term measures indicated that students learned some factual and procedural knowledge from the TV411 Facilitated Group. However, this may be secondary to the participants' changing their literacy interests and increasing their confidence, which may, in turn, lead them to engage the books and related activities that will enhance their ability to succeed in furthering their education. Students' changes in confidence and literacy behaviors are discussed in Chapter 5.

Writing Skills

All students were expected to keep a portfolio of their work as part of the study requirements; these were submitted to the research staff at the final interview. While keeping a portfolio of their work was a novel idea for project participants, portfolios are accepted as an alternative method of assessing student work in both K- 12 education and college writing classes (Elbow, 1991). Portfolios provide a way to examine the process students use in writing (not only the product), encourage students to become more reflective about their own work and allow students to track their own development

(Mills-Courts and Amiran, 1991). Typically, using a portfolio as an assessment tool requires both extensive training of students and extensive time and feedback from the teacher to the student. Because of the structure of the Facilitated Group, the implementation of a portfolio component varied from this model. While students were encouraged to revise their work, students were not trained in a way that would allow them to gain the maximum benefit from a portfolio. However, the portfolio did provide a way to students to organize and track their work and allowed them to see the quantity and quality of work they produced during the TV411 Facilitated Group.

Evaluating portfolios can be approached from different angles. One way is to simply count the amount of work included in a portfolio and to categorize that work. Another, more subjective approach involves the reviewer making judgments about the contents of the portfolio and looking for evidence of progress. The researchers opted to combine these two approaches in hopes of providing a more comprehensive understanding of how students used their portfolios. The quantitative analysis was presented in Chapter 3.

Portfolio Contents: Qualitative Analysis

The Brooklyn Winter 2001 group was selected as the focus of the qualitative analysis, because their portfolio content counts matched the mean scores for the overall sample. The analysis provides insight into the type of material students placed into their portfolios, the revisions they made and the overall focus of their work in the program.

The qualitative analysis focused on work that students completed outside of the workbooks. Most of these entries were writing activities. While many students expressed an interest in learning math, few included more than a few examples of mathematical computation in their portfolio. Many students wrote extensively, often including revisions of a particular piece or pieces in their portfolios. The writing in the students' portfolios tended to have common themes and stress similar values. Learners wrote about their families and relationships, their desire for self-improvement, the importance of education, and issues of particular local importance, such as violence. Portfolios included poems, songs, essays, personal and business letters, statements of personal goals, and personal dictionaries.

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While most students included examples showing revisions on at least some of their work, most of the revisions were at the copyedit level. Students recopied their work with neater handwriting and corrected grammar, spelling and punctuation—usually in response to feedback from the facilitator. For most, revising a piece meant paying more attention to the mechanics of writing, rather than to content or style. A few students, however, did make more extensive revisions based upon feedback on comments from the facilitator. The two drafts of the essay below demonstrate a student who was able to expand and enrich the detail in her writing.

What My Talent is (First Draft)

Food preparation is something special to me. It is what I always feel very confident doing. I began cooking as early as nine years of age.

My interest started developing since my father, who was taking care of me couldn't cook. I used to eat fast food every day. And in no time I became tired of it. So I started experimenting cooking with fresh vegetables. From that day on I tried creating different kinds of food every day.

Somehow, as the years went by, I progressed with numerous recipes. Which lead me to a cooking contest in my High school years. Anyhow putting all the numerous dishes together, I won my first cooking contest. This particular award made me very popular and proud of myself.

Therefore cooking food is a talent of mine which is also something special, to both my family and friends. Because they can depend on me whenever they need a recipe or a helping hand.

The facilitator made two comments on this student's work. Where the student wrote about beginning to cook with fresh vegetables, the facilitator wrote, "Focus on detail. What did you do? What were the results?" The facilitator also suggested that the writer "Tell about the contest and your reaction to winning." The student revised the piece as follows:

What My Talent is (Final Draft)

Food preparation is something special to me. It is what I always feel very confident. I began cooking as early as nine years of age.

My interest started developing since my father, who was taking care of me, couldn't cook. So I started experimenting cooking with fresh vegetables like eggplant, tomato, okra and onions. The first day, I cooked eggplant and tomato stew with rice. And it came out good because my father complimented me all evening.

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From that day on I tried creating different kinds of food every day. I cooked spinach and beans stew with white yams, cabbage and beef stew and potatoes and a lot more.

Somehow, as the years went by I progressed with numerous recipes like tuna casseroles, vegetable pies and vegetable soup. Which lead me to a cooking contest in my high school years.

Anyhow putting all the above recipes and more together for my church woman's day, I won my first cooking contest. I cooked a special vegetable rice called Jollof and fish stew and everybody liked the taste of it. Especially the way I garnished the dish with green, red and yellow bell peppers. It looked so colourful.

This contest I won made both my family and friends very proud of me. This cooking is a talent of mine, which is also special to both my family and friends in time of need.

The student was able to respond to the request for more details and create a piece that conjured up more specific images and feelings. This reflects skills she may have learned from the TV411 videos and workbooks as well as from interacting in the Facilitated Group as the facilitator and students discussed and critiqued student writing.

In addition, an examination of the portfolios showed that many students used the writing exercises as a way of self-expression and/or self-reflection. Many students wrote in depth, and with true emotion about various events and people in their lives. For some, it provided a new outlet for their emotions: "Because I never actually revealed how I felt about this difficult situation. So I figured, write it and put my heart at ease." The following essay is an example of a student exploring a critical time in her life in writing.

When I Turned My Life Around

I will start with introducing myself. My name is ----. I am forty-eight years old. I had married when I just turned nineteen year of age. Although I was young, I was responsible.

We started a family right away. We had three children. Unfortunately, my husband was not ready for a family. Our marriage was deteriorating. I was raising the children and working as a waitress at night. My husband was not a bad person, however he didn't want to grow.

I was very close to my mother. We either were shopping, going out to lunch or just visiting each other. If we didn't see each other, we were on the phone. As the years went by and everyone got older, so did my mom. My sister and I took turns caring for her. I didn't mind, she had a great sense of humor even when she was at her worst.

My mom was indeed my best friend. There was no one who knew better about me than my mother, like most mothers they know when things aren't going well.

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When I would get upset she would say “You have to be strong, no one lives forever.” The worst curve life could have thrown my way when my mother passed away. I can’t recall very much, but I do know I went into hibernation.

As months went on I knew I was going to make changes, and I did, they were all for the best.

I filed for a divorce, and had a talk with my children. I was taking a computer class and they would have to fend for themselves.

Once I educated myself for the skills that I would need to work in the corporate world, I quit my waitress job of 17 yrs and experienced a different world. I’m glad I made the decision and I have no regrets however, I do know, that is not for me. I would love to work with children. In order to make that possible I have to continue my education. I am focusing on getting my GED and hopefully, taking college courses. Yes, life will throw curves, that is inevitable.

So you make the best out of a difficult situation.

In addition, many students included poems and songs in their portfolios. In their final interviews, students frequently commented that they were proud of these items because they were things that had not done prior to the TV411 Facilitated Group, and were in fact, surprised to learn that this was something they could do. “Because it was hard, because I never wrote a song. It was interesting to do it as part of the workbook. I just started writing what came into my head, then re-grouped and there it was. I liked it.” This suggests a greater confidence in dealing with written language.

Students Reflect on their Portfolios

For virtually all of the students, this was the first time they had been required to keep a portfolio of their work. The researchers were interested in assessing students’ perceptions of their own work in the portfolios. Did it instill a sense of pride? Was it something they valued? Did it include work that they would not otherwise have done? These issues were explored in the exit interview.

When asked, *Are there any items in your portfolio that you particularly like—perhaps some things you are proud of?* 53% of students responded affirmatively. When asked to identify two of those items to discuss in the interview students most often selected essays (21%) and poems or songs (18%), hinting that learners may tend to get most excited about creative activities or the ability to use language in new ways. One student commented: “I’ve never written a poem. I didn’t think I can do it. I like it better because it’s something about me.” Students also frequently selected items in which they revealed their emotions or wrote about an important person or event in their lives. For

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these students, using writing as a means of self-expression was a new, and valued experience: “I expressed. I was able to express on paper some inner feelings. Sometimes when you talk to people they don’t really listen, so it helped to release the feelings.” Some students had trouble limiting themselves to two items, wanting to share multiple pieces of writing with the interviewers; this indicated the depth of pride students took in their accomplishments. In addition, 44% of these students reported that the item they selected represented something they would not have done, or would not have done as well, before taking this course. This suggests that the experience did prompt them to engage in new activities or improve on existing skills.

Participants were also asked to identify the inspiration for the pieces they selected. The majority of students (60%) indicated that it was done in response to a workbook suggestion. As one student commented,

The workbooks gave me the guidelines. It simplified the way to go about it. It really made it easy because before I thought I had to put in so much work to impress the person but the workbook and video taught me it’s not about impression, it’s about how you feel and the way you would have said it on the phone. It’s just that when you put in writing there are certain rules that you have to apply. It also gave me the confidence that there is nothing to be afraid of, like spelling because you make a draft and then after, you rewrite it to correct it. It gave me the confidence.

Smaller proportions of students identified the video or their facilitator as the inspiration for the activity and some student commented that their inspiration came from a mixture of sources: “It was everything that was in my class and in the videos that made me want to do it. It’s like a brand new start for me, so everything is all right today. I enjoyed every minute of it.”

Further examination of the data showed that the source of inspiration varied from site to site (see Table 4.6). Students in the Bronx group were more likely than other students to cite the facilitator as the inspiration for the portfolio piece they shared with researchers. This again raises questions regarding the role of the facilitator in encouraging students to use the portfolios, directing how they are used and getting students excited about their work. Site visits to the classes suggested that the Bronx facilitator employed a more hands-on teaching method than did some of the other facilitators, which may help explain why the facilitator was mentioned as the inspiration more often by Bronx students.

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Table 4.6 Inspiration for Favorite Portfolio Pieces by Site

Inspiration	Brooklyn Sum 2000	Brooklyn Wtr 2001	CWE	Bronx	RTC	Total*
Facilitator Prompted	1 4%	6 8%	0 0%	2 20%	1 13%	10 8%
Workbook Prompted	12 52%	49 66%	4 44%	6 60%	6 63%	75 60%
Video Prompted	6 26%	15 20%	2 22%	0 0%	1 13%	24 19%
Other	4 17%	4 5%	3 33%	2 20%	1 13%	17 13%
Total	23 100%	74 100%	9 100%	10 100%	9 100%	126 100%

*Students could comment on two selections, and therefore mention a source more than once.

In short, for most students, the portfolio became not only a repository of their work but a visible symbol of accomplishments in which they took great pride.

Chapter 5

Impact on Literacy Beliefs and Educational Plans

This chapter examines plans to engage in the literacy activities promoted in TV411, on confidence to perform the promoted activities and on plans for additional schooling.

Literacy Behaviors and Plans

A major goal of TV411 is to stimulate the audience to engage in a variety of literacy activities that may not be part of their daily repertoire—write a letter, use a dictionary, analyze sale prices to figure out the best deal. If the participants respond to the suggestions in the shows and to the intrinsic reward they received from engaging in the activities, then there should be a change in the activities they engage in at the end of the test period. To assess this, participants were asked before the test period began and again afterwards about both their *actual behaviors* in the previous weeks and their *plans* for the coming weeks to engage in each of 24 literacy activities promoted on the ten TV411 shows included in this test. Our focus was on their plans. While plans to behave and actual behaviors are not the same, plans are a good indicator of what people want to do and therefore a good indicator of this type of impact. Plans can also be viewed as an attitude measure: if behavioral expectations increased over the ten weeks, then the experience has led to a more positive attitude and a *predisposition* to behave in new ways.

The baseline and follow-up interviews asked about literacy activities in two separate questions. The first question asked:

In life we have routines; we do many of the same things from week to week. I'm going to list a number of activities—like reading a newspaper or writing a letter—and I want you to tell me how often you did this in the last week.

There were three choices: (1) No-I didn't do this in the last week, (2) I did it once, and (3) I did it more than once. Asking about behaviors helped focus the respondent's attention on each activity, even though the primary interest was on their response to the next question about their plans. The second question used the same list and asked:

For each activity I also want you to indicate how likely it is you will do this in the next week.

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There were four choices: (1) Not at all likely, (2) A small chance, (3) Very likely, and (4) Definitely. The questions were asked in a one-on-one face-to-face interview, and participants were trained in the meaning of the scales before being asked about the various activities. In the list of literacy activities, nine were ones that it was reasonable for a person to do in the course of one week; these were asked about first. For the other 15 the reasonable time frame was one month and these were asked about second.

The data for shift in plans for engaging in these literacy behaviors are shown in Table 5.1. Before the study began, the average across all 24 items was 2.63 (between *a small chance* and *very likely*). Afterwards expectations averaged 3.06 (*very likely*). Table 5.1 presents the data for each item. The table shows the percent that selected *very likely* or *definitely* at pretest and at posttest along with the difference between these two numbers. The difference indicates the percentage that increased their expectation that they would engage in the activity, presumably as a result of engaging in the TV411 activities. Within the *next week* and *next month* categories, the activities are ordered by the size of the increase.

Only seven of the 24 activities did not show a statistically significant increase. Within activities for next week, the largest increases were for look up a word in a dictionary (35.9%) and write in a diary or journal (26.8%). Three other activities had increases in the teens: read a book because the story is interesting (14.2), read a newspaper (11.3) and read a food label (10.2). It should be noted that 70 percent and more of the participants expected to do these activities prior to TV411. Similarly, though there was only a 4.2% increase for using math in shopping or bill paying, 86% expected to do this prior to TV411.

Within activities for next month the largest increases were for write a poem (36.6%) and write an essay (33.8%). Both of these activities are quite uncommon, and it is surprising that such a large number would have been persuaded that they would do these things in the coming month. Many other reading and writing activities showed increases as well. It is perhaps less important exactly which activities showed a shift, than it is that the Facilitated Group experience had an impact on a wide range of literacy activities, many of which were not in the participants' regular repertoire.

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Table 5.1 Plans to Do Literacy Activities Modeled on TV411

Literacy Activity	<u>PRE</u> Pct Very / Def	<u>POST</u> Pct Very/Def	Increase	Sig.
<u>NEXT WEEK</u>				
Look up a word in the dictionary	57.1%	93.0%	35.9%	0.000
Write in a diary or journal	40.8	67.6	26.8	0.000
Read a book because the story is interesting	70.4	84.6	14.2	0.002
Read a newspaper	71.8	83.1	11.3	0.004
Read a food label	71.5	81.7	10.2	0.009
Use math in shopping/ bill paying	86.0	90.2	4.2	0.052
Read a book to learn something	84.3	88.8	4.5	0.265
Read a magazine	70.4	74.6	4.2	0.209
Read a book to a child	53.5	50.7	-2.8	0.394
<i>Average Next Week</i>	<i>67.3</i>	<i>79.4</i>	<i>12.1</i>	
<u>NEXT MONTH</u>				
Write a poem	16.9	53.5	36.6	0.000
Write an essay	42.2	76.0	33.8	0.000
Prepare a Resume	40.8	61.9	21.1	0.003
Edit your writing	60.6	78.9	18.3	0.005
Go to a library	53.5	71.8	18.3	0.000
Check a book out of library	52.1	66.2	14.1	0.003
Buy a book to read for pleasure	59.1	71.8	12.7	0.005
Write to a friend	52.1	64.7	12.6	0.038
Write to a company	11.2	22.5	11.3	0.011
Use a map	40.9	52.1	11.2	0.116
Make a budget	84.5	92.9	8.4	0.020
Evaluate sale prices to find best deal	81.6	90.2	8.6	0.060
Buy a book for a child	44.3	46.5	2.2	0.201
Read details of credit card offer	40.0	42.2	2.2	0.057
Send a card w/ special message	70.5	69.0	-1.5	0.391
<i>Average Next Month</i>	<i>50.0</i>	<i>64.0</i>	<i>14.0</i>	
<i>Average Overall</i>	<i>56.5</i>	<i>69.8</i>	<i>13.3</i>	

NOTES: Scale = (1) Not At All Likely; (2) A Small Chance; (3) Very Likely; (4) Definitely. "Pre Pct Very/Def" is the percent saying they would very likely or definitely do the activity in the coming week or month, n = 71. Significance comes from a Wilcoxon test of the difference between respondent's pre and post expectation that they will do the activity in the coming week/month. Increases associated with significance levels of 0.050 or smaller are considered important and appear in bold.

Confidence in Literacy Skills

A content analysis of the ten shows and workbooks identified literacy skills that were modeled in the materials—skills that included using a dictionary or thesaurus, writing or editing an essay, and calculating an average. It was reasonable that students might have learned—from the messages in the videos, from their own successes in the workbooks, or from success at doing activities for their portfolio—that they could do things better than they had thought originally and that they would become more confident of themselves in these areas.

To measure confidence participants were asked—both before and after the facilitated group—to rate their confidence in performing each of the skills. Each of the skills in the list was read aloud during the face-to-face interview and participants were asked to respond on a four-point scale: (1) Not At All Confident, (2) A Little Confident, (3) Pretty Confident, and (4) Very Confident. As with the literacy behaviors, participants were trained in how to use the rating scale. Before the study began, confidence averaged 2.81 across the activities—a little below Pretty Confident. Afterwards confidence averaged 3.12—a little above Pretty Confident.

Table 5.2 (top section) presents the data for skills associated with reading and writing. The table shows the percent that selected “pretty confident” or “very confident” at the pretest and at the posttest along with the difference between these two numbers. The difference indicates the percentage that increased their confidence, presumably as a result of engaging in the TV411 activities. On average, 14.1% of the learners increased their confidence in the reading and writing skills used in TV411. The largest increase was for use of a thesaurus: 34% were confident at the pretest and 89% at the posttest—an increase of 55%. (At the pretest many learners did not even know what a thesaurus was.) There were also large increases in the number who were confident they could write an essay (26.8), write a letter to a business (22.6), write a poem or song (22.6), and edit your own writing (19.6).

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Table 5.2 Confidence in Reading/Writing and Math Skills

Literacy Skill	PRE Pct. Pretty or Very Confident	POST Pct. Pretty or Very Confident	Increase	Sig.*
Reading and Writing Skills				
Write an essay about something you did	56.3%	83.1%	26.8%	0.000
Write a letter to a business	47.9	70.5	22.6	0.002
Write a poem or song	35.2	57.8	22.6	0.000
Edit your own writing	50.8	70.4	19.6	0.000
Recognize good grammar	42.3	53.5	11.2	0.001
Write a letter to a friend or relative	80.3	87.3	7.0	0.097
Use a thesaurus	33.8	88.8	55.0	0.000
Figure out the meaning of words	39.4	56.4	17.0	0.011
Use a dictionary to find meaning of words	95.8	100.0	4.2	0.002
Figure out spelling of words when you are writing	61.9	71.8	9.9	0.175
<i>Average Reading & Writing Skills</i>	51.0%	65.2%	14.1%	
Math Skills				
How to change a fraction to a %	35.2	54.9	19.7	0.000
Calculate an average or %	39.6	55.0	15.4	0.000
Figure out price of an item on sale	57.7	73.2	15.5	0.005
Estimate an approximate total price for a set of items	67.6	77.4	9.8	0.010
Figure out the best deal in a sale	81.4	85.9	4.5	0.215
Know which math operation to use	71.8	76.0	4.2	0.554
Estimate likelihood, such as winning a lottery	67.6	71.8	4.2	0.192
Understand stub of a paycheck	88.7	98.6	9.9	0.007
Understand the small print in a credit card offer	64.8	71.8	7.0	0.001
Set up a family budget	88.7	88.8	0.1	0.170
<i>Average Everyday Math Skills</i>	66.3	75.3	9.0	

NOTES: Scale = (1) Not At All Confident; (2) A Little Confident; (3) Pretty Confident; (4) Very Confident “Pct Pretty or Very Confident” is the percent saying they were pretty or very confident they could do the activity, n = 71. Significance comes from a Wilcoxon test of the difference between respondents’ pre and post confidence. Increases associated with significance levels of 0.050 or smaller are considered important and appear in bold.

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Confidence in mathematics skills is shown in the bottom section of Table 5.2. The increases were smaller on average (9.1%), though learners expressed higher confidence in math skills than reading and writing skills at the pretest. The biggest increases were seen for computational skills such as how to change a fraction to a percent (19.7), calculate an average or a percent (15.4), and figure out the sale price for an item that is reduced by a certain percent (15.5).

Confidence in several miscellaneous skills modeled in TV411 is shown in Table 5.3. There were small increases in confidence regarding what to include in a resume (9.9) and how to fill out a job application (9.9). Confidence in reading a map did not increase significantly.

Table 5.3 Confidence in Other Skills

Literacy Activity	<u>PRE</u> Pct. Pretty or Very Confident	<u>POST</u> Pct. Pretty or Very Confident	Increase	Sig.*
Know what to include in a resume	55.0	70.4	15.4	0.028
Fill out a job application	87.3	97.2	9.9	0.009
Use a map or atlas to find a place	71.8	74.7	2.9	0.504

* Paired comparison Wilcoxon test.

Overall Confidence

After responding to each of the individual literacy activities, learners were asked about their overall confidence in the areas of reading, writing, and figuring out an average or percent. The data for are shown in Table 5.4. Almost everyone (89%) expressed more confidence in reading. Three quarters (72%) said they were more confident that they could calculate an average or percent (the two math skills taught in the ten shows). Only 50% were more confident that they could write more clearly—arguably the most complicated skill area of the three.

It is less important to note which activities showed the greatest change than it is to recognize that change does occur. These results suggest that it is possible to increase learners' confidence with a modest intervention consisting of two meetings a week where learners watch an entertaining video, complete a small number of easy-to-complete exercises in a workbook, practice writing or math to include in their portfolio and do so in a supportive peer and teaching environment. Increasing students' confidence in their

ability to succeed at literacy activities may be an important step in providing the support adult learners need to further their education.

Table 5.4 Overall Confidence at the Post Interview

As a result of spending the last 10 weeks in the TV411 study, would you say you are more or less confident about your ability...

	TOTAL	More Confident	About the Same	Less Confident
<i>...to read things you come across?</i>	100%	89%	11%	0%
<i>...to figure out an average or a percentage?</i>	100%	72%	27%	1%
<i>...to write clearly?</i>	100%	50%	44%	6%

Participants provided a variety of explanations for why they felt more confident. The reasons for increased confidence in *reading things you come across* tended to focus on learning reading strategies as well as reading more frequently. Here are some examples:

Because I learned things about how to read; even utility bills. I learned to ask 'why, when, who' questions when I'm reading.

Because TV411 forces you how to read and write and express yourself. You have to understand what you're reading before you write.

Because I feel I learned a lot in the TV411 program with the reading. Everyone took a chance going around the room reading every day. And that was something I never liked doing before.

Explanations for increased confidence in writing were mostly about having learned to improve some of the mechanics of writing and to increased opportunities to practice writing.

I know how to put my ideas together now. Before, I didn't do no first and second draft. Now I put them into paragraphs after the first draft.

I have been writing a lot lately. I rewrite and rewrite it. It's the practice, but if somebody doesn't tell you what to write, you won't find a reason to.

I didn't write before. I now have three journals for all the topics I write about.

Students offered the following reasons for their increased confidence in specific math skills.

Math is everything and everywhere. The materials tell you how to use math and push you to use it often.

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I need math each and every day. Before, I just accepted what they said I earned. Now I can figure it out for myself. I calculate the deductions and make sure they are right.

I've been doing percents over and over and I finally understand it.

Plans for More Schooling

One of the things we were interested in examining was whether participating in a TV411 Facilitated Group influenced students' desire to continue their education in a more structured, formal setting. Based on self-reports, the answer is yes. In this chapter we look at educational plans and changes in plans for the 37 adults who completed a Facilitated Group in the summer of 2000. In the next chapter we look at a special group of 34 adults who participated in a Facilitated Group in the winter of 2001 as a prerequisite for admission into a regular educational program at Brooklyn EOC. For this group, educational plans had a different meaning.

Of the 37 adults who completed a Facilitated Group in the summer of 2000, 84% said that it was likely or very likely that they would enroll in school in the following six months. When asked if their plans had changed as a result of their TV411 experience, more than half (51%) said yes. Of these, a little over one-third said that the experience made them want to get their GED or high school diploma; another third said it made them realize their potential and make new plans for school.

Adults in all of the Facilitated Groups were asked if they got any new ideas for a job that they might try in the future. About half (47%) said yes. Of these, about half could identify specific jobs in computers, nursing, or clerical arenas; the other half did not name specific jobs. But all of them indicated that they would need more education or training if they were to get the job they wanted.

Chapter 6 Impact on Further Education

As it became clear that the Facilitated Group could enhance participants' confidence in their academic skills and prompt them to consider getting further education, it seemed natural to ask whether the experience could actually prepare them to have a more successful experience once they entered school. The Coordinator of Academic Affairs at the Brooklyn EOC was interested in testing this hypothesis. Working with the research team, she selected forty applicants to the GED preparation program whose reading scores fell just below the cutoff for admission to the program (TABE reading and/or math scores below the 7th grade level). She offered them the opportunity of being admitted to the regular GED Prep classes if they would complete a three-week intensive version of a TV411 Facilitated Group. She called the program Prelude to Success and convinced these students that this was the experience they needed to succeed in Brooklyn's GED Prep classes.

At Brooklyn, the GED preparation program runs for one or two 10-week semesters, depending upon a student's skills when entering the program. The research plan involved tracking the Facilitated Group students through their first semester and comparing their performance in school with the performance of a matched set of controls, similar in age and gender and having TABE reading and math scores as close as possible to the Prelude students. Their performance would also be compared with all other students in the GED preparation classes. The research plan is shown below.

Figure 6.1 Research Design for Prelude to Success Experiment

Group	Feb	March	April	May	June
1. Prelude Group (33)	TV411 FG*	First 10-Week Semester for GED Prep Students			
2. Matched Controls (33)	nothing				
3. All Others in GED Prep Program (87)	nothing				

* TV411 Facilitated Group for 39 hours

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In general, as the table below indicates, the Prelude students were well-matched with their controls. The major difference between the students was in their TABE scores on initial testing at the Brooklyn EOC, as shown in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2 TABE Scores of Prelude Students and Comparison Groups

Group	TABE Score Description
Prelude Students	Scored less than 7.0 on either the TABE Reading or TABE Math Assessment.
Matched Controls	Scored at least 7.0 on both TABE Math and Reading assessments, and had average scores close to those of the Prelude students.
All Other Students in GED Prep Program	Scored at least 7.0 on both TABE Math and Reading assessments, and had scores higher than Prelude or Matched Control students

All matching was done without knowledge of students' final grades or of their end-of-semester enrollment status. Table 6.1 presents more detail about the characteristics of the three groups of students.

Table 6.1 Characteristics of the GED Preparation Groups

		Prelude Students	Matched Controls	Other Students	Total
Total		33 100%	33 100%	58 100%	124 100%
Program*	Pre-GED	20 61%	20 61%	13 22%	53 43%
	GED	13 39%	13 39%	45 78%	71 57%
Age	Mean	36	33	31	33
	Range	18-60	19-53	18-68	18-68
Gender	Male	7 21%	7 21%	23 40%	37 30%
	Female	26 79%	26 79%	35 60%	87 70%
TABE	Reading	8.4	8.5	9.4	8.9
	Math	7.2	7.5	8.9	8.1

Note: The 33 Prelude students who completed the TV411 facilitated group and enrolled in the first 10-week Brooklyn EOC semester were matched with non-Prelude counterparts based on 5 criteria. Students were first sorted by their certification program (GED or Pre-GED) and then by gender. Students were then matched based on their age and TABE reading and math scores. Most Prelude students were matched with non-Prelude students who were within 5 years of age and had reading and math scores that were within less than one grade level of each other. In many instances, match

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features were almost identical on all criteria. In a few instances, matches were less close on one of the criteria—usually either age or math score. In these cases, researchers decided reading level was the most important match feature and so sorted with that as the first criterion.

*Students were assigned to either the GED-prep or the GED program based upon scores on the GED Predictor test administered by Brooklyn EOC staff.

Table 6.1 shows that the Prelude students and their matched controls had very similar scores on the TABE reading and math assessments. However, the other students enrolled in this session had higher average scores on both of these measures; this was anticipated, as the Prelude students were chosen to participate in the program because one or more of their test scores fell below the acceptable levels for admission to the regular courses. It is important to note that the Prelude students thus begin the regular GED Prep classes with a lower skill level than do other students at the Brooklyn EOC.

How did the Prelude students expect to do in the regular Brooklyn EOC classes? During the final interview, Prelude students were asked, “A month ago, when you applied to take these classes at Brooklyn EOC, how confident were you that you would do well in these classes?” Their responses suggested that many had concerns in this regard: while half claimed to be “pretty” or “very confident,” the other half reported being “not at all confident” or “a little” confident. They were then asked if their confidence about future academic success had changed after participation in the Facilitated Group. Table 6.2 shows their responses; participation in the Facilitated group increased confidence in success in future classes for more than 90% of the Prelude students.

Table 6.2 Confidence That I Will Succeed in the Regular GED Prep Class (after completing the TV411 Facilitated Group)

Response	n (Pct.)
Less confident	0 (0%)
About the same	3 (9%)
More Confident	15 (44%)
Much more confident	16 (47%)

Students who indicated that they were now more or much more confident about succeeding in their next class were asked to explain the reasons for the change in their confidence. Approximately three fourths of these students commented that they were

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better prepared, as a result of participating in the Facilitated Group and another about quarter reported being more confident in their abilities and skills. Student explanations included:

It has given me a learning style and a way to study. It has taught me how to go about things after being out of school for 20 – 25 years. It has taught me how to apply every day life.

Because a lot of things I never did. I’ve been out of school for a while. Reading was not my thing, writing was not my thing. Now I can do it all, thanks to TV411. The people that spoke on the videos, they just opened my mind. They made me want to do more.

Because I know what I’m here for I’m going to achieve it. I didn’t want to say “much more” confident because the new classes could be overwhelming. I did good here. Why NOT think I’m going to do good in another class?

Because of the things that I learned. It’s like this program gives you a jump start of what to expect.

Thus, Prelude students began the GED prep classes with an increased sense of confidence in their ability to succeed. How did they actually do? The performance of the three groups is shown in the tables below. Overall, 36% of all students who entered the GED prep program dropped or had a failing average by the end of the first semester. The Prelude students had the same rate as the overall rate: 36%; their matched control counterparts had a much higher dropout/failure rate: 52%. The Other Controls (with higher reading and math scores) dropped or failed at a rate of 26%. These findings indicate that the Prelude students received important benefits from participating in the TV411 Facilitated Group class prior to enrolling in the more rigorous GED preparation courses at the Brooklyn EOC.

Table 6.3 Attrition Rates of Spring 2001 GED Prep Students

Group	TV411 Prelude Students	Matched Controls	Other GED Prep Students	Total
Passed	21 65%	16 48%	43 74%	80 65%
Failed or Dropped	12 36%	17 52%	15 26%	44 36%
Total	33 100%	33 100%	58 100%	124 100%

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Researchers also examined students' end-of-semester academic performance. Grades were calculated for those students who "passed" the semester by earning an overall average of 65% on their final grades for the semester. Overall, Prelude students slightly outperformed their matched control counterparts by an average of 3% on their final grades (though these differences were not statistically significant) and were within one percentage point of the overall grade average of the entire Spring semester GED prep group. Both the Prelude and matched control groups were slightly less successful than other control group students. This finding is not surprising, however, given that many of the GED prep control group students had TABE reading and math scores as high as 12.9. Only one of the 66 Prelude and matched control students had a reading level score above 10th grade. The remainder scored below 9.5 on their TABE reading and math scores.

Table 6.4 Final Grades

Group	n	Average Grade
TV411 Prelude Students	21	77%
Matched Controls	16	74%
Other GED Prep Students	43	80%
Total	80	78%

Note: Average of final grade in all courses taken during the semester.

Although the numbers in this study are small, this experiment provides encouraging evidence that the Prelude experience, using TV411 materials and tasks in a Facilitated Group, can help students with marginal academic skills prepare to transition to and succeed in a traditional academic program. Of particular significance is their lower attrition rate than their match counterparts.

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