

research in brief

Effects of Study Guide

Extension personnel, as well as other practitioners of adult education, often find themselves involved with individualized instruction with mature people. It has become increasingly popular to use instructional packets to facilitate such individuals' learning. These packets try to provide the feedback and time freedom of programmed material without the rigidity often associated with programmed material. Kotaska and Dickinson tried to determine whether one component of such packets, the study guide, increases the effectiveness of such material.

Through the use of two experimental groups (one using individualized packets with a study guide and one with the same packet without the study guide) and a control group (which only took the post-test), the study tried to find out if the material facilitated adult learning and if the study guide further aided this learning. There were 21 subjects in the control group, 18 in the experimental group with a study guide, and 17 in the experimental group without a study guide.

Here are the study's results:

1. The groups using the learning packets did score significantly higher than the group that only took the post-test.
2. There was no significant difference in the mean post-test scores of the two experimental groups.

The conclusion that the study guide didn't significantly affect the scores on the post-test suggests that a study guide may not always be necessary or helpful and that this may be a function of the individual adult learner's needs for direction or guidance.

"Effects of a Study Guide on Independent Adult Learning."
Janelyn G. Kostaska and Gary Dickinson. *Adult Education*,
XXV (Spring, 1975), 161-68.

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