

Incorporating Mobile Solutions to Improve Adult Literacy: Evaluation of the XPRIZE Communities Competition

Client: Barbara Bush Foundation

Overview

In 2015 the Barbara Bush Foundation, XPRIZE Foundation, and Dollar General Literacy Foundation joined forces to tackle the largest obstacles to achieving basic literacy—access, retention, and scale. The organizations collaborated to launch the \$7 million Barbara Bush Foundation Adult Literacy XPRIZE competition. This competition challenged teams to develop mobile applications for smartphones (e.g., apps) that increase literacy skills among participating adult learners. Among the applicants, four apps were chosen for moving into a second phase of competition, called the XPRIZE Communities Competition (XPRIZE-CC). This phase was designed for organizations, communities, and individuals to develop strategies for promoting the four apps and recruiting adult learners to download and use these apps.

As part of this work, the Barbara Bush Foundation needed an evaluation to assess the impact of incorporating mobile solutions on the literacy skills of adult learners. Insight is providing a four-phase study: (1) developing a learning agenda, (2) conducting an implementation study to assess and improve the apps, (3) designing and piloting an outcomes evaluation, and (4) conducting the evaluation and reporting outcomes.

The implementation study was designed to help the foundation understand and document the strategies organizations use to increase access among adult learners, challenges they face, factors that contribute to their success or failure



in meeting their benchmarks, and lessons the foundation and other organizations can use to continue pursuing the goals of increasing access and improving literacy skills after the XPRIZE-CC has ended. As part of this work, Insight is conducting—

- An in-depth review of the winning XPRIZE-CC proposals and judges' ratings
- A web survey of all teams that registered for the XPRIZE-CC
- Phone interviews with select, high-performing XPRIZE-CC teams
- Site visits and focus groups with mobile application users recruited by select, high-performing XPRIZE-CC teams

Work in the design of the outcomes evaluation is currently in process.

Products

Final reports, each summarizing the four phases; how-to guide sharing best practices with organizations seeking to increase access to literacy resources