

What Does “Levels of Evidence” Mean?

Level of Evidence	ESSA Definition ^{2,3}	WWC Practice Guide Recommendation ^{3,4}	Related WWC Ratings and Study Characterizations ^{2,3}
Strong evidence	Supported by statistically significant and positive findings from one or more well-designed and well-implemented experimental studies.	Consistently supported by positive findings from multiple studies that (1) include a well-designed and well-implemented experimental study supporting causal claims and (2) include participants who represent the students whom the strategy is intended to support.	Meets WWC standards without reservations under version 2.1 or higher of the WWC Handbook , AND based on a large sample and a multisite sample.
Moderate evidence	Supported by statistically significant and positive findings from one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental design studies.	Supported by positive findings from studies that use a well-implemented quasi-experimental design, or by one or more studies using an experimental design that may not include participants who represent the students whom the strategy is intended to support.	Meets WWC standards with or without reservations under version 2.1 or higher of the WWC Handbook , AND based on a large sample and a multisite sample.
Promising evidence	Supported by statistically significant and positive findings from one or more correlational studies with statistical controls for selection bias.	Any recommendation with a “strong” or “moderate” rating can provide promising evidence, regardless of whether the guide was prepared under version 2.1 or higher of the WWC Handbook .	Does not meet WWC standards, OR ineligible for WWC review, OR not reviewed under version 2.1 or higher of the WWC Handbook , OR based on a sample that is not a large sample and a multisite sample.
Demonstrates a rationale / Minimal evidence	Supported by theory that is informed by research or program evaluation.	Supported by strong theory or descriptive research indicating that the strategy may result in positive outcomes, or at least is needed to support the other practice recommendations.	Does not meet WWC standards, OR ineligible for WWC review, OR does not include a statistically significant and positive finding.