

Practice Guide Level of Evidence Video

Transcript

What Works Clearinghouse practice guides provide educators with evidence-based practices to tackle current challenges in education. Practice guides combine the best available evidence and expertise on a topic to give educators strategies to use in their classrooms and schools.

Practice guides contain several recommendations on a topic with specific, practical steps to carry out each recommendation.

Each practice guide recommendation is assigned a level of evidence that summarizes the rigorous research supporting the recommendation. Let's review the three possible levels of evidence and how a level of evidence is determined.

There are three levels of evidence: Minimal, moderate, and strong. These levels indicate the strength of the evidence for the effect of the recommended practices on student achievement. In other words, the level of evidence signals how confident we are that the recommended practice, and not something else, consistently improved outcomes for students in the studies.

To determine the level of evidence, WWC certified reviewers assess all of the research related to each recommended practice in the guide. Then, the WWC works with a panel of experts to assign a level of evidence to each recommendation.

We consider several criteria when determining the level of evidence for a practice guide recommendation, including:

- The number of studies supporting the recommended practices;
- Whether the recommended practices were directly tested in the studies or tested in combination with other practices;
- Whether the recommended practices consistently led to improved outcomes within and across studies; and
- Whether the studies capture a diverse range of students and contexts

To earn a higher evidence rating, studies supporting a recommendation must use high-quality, rigorous designs, like a randomized controlled trial or quasi-experimental design, and they must be implemented well. The studies must also meet WWC design standards.

The studies meeting standards must also represent a diverse range of students and contexts for a recommendation to receive a higher evidence rating. For example, did the study test the intervention in different states? Was it tested in rural and urban areas? Was it tested with general education students, students with disabilities, or students who don't speak English as a first language?

After taking these criteria into consideration, we determine a level of evidence for each recommendation.

Based on these criteria, it's not uncommon for a practice guide recommendation to be assigned a minimal level of evidence. However, it's important to note that a minimal level of evidence does not mean that there is no research evidence supporting the recommendation.

All recommendations in a guide are supported by at least some rigorous research, and the expert panel endorses all of the guide's recommendations, regardless of the level of evidence.

A minimal level evidence means that some research studies support the recommended practice, but more rigorous research is needed to examine its effects. For example, perhaps a recommended practice needs to be tested more widely, such as in more settings or with more students.

The rationale for each level of evidence rating is described in detail in the practice guide's appendix.

You'll also find a full list of the studies providing evidence for each recommendation, along with some basic information about each study, like the number of study participants, the setting, a description of the intervention and comparison conditions, and findings.

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