WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT DISTANCE LEARNING RESEARCH?

The What Works Clearinghouse is rapidly reviewing studies to support educators who are shifting to virtual instruction because of COVID-19. Below, we highlight the scope of distance learning research that is currently under WWC review.

932 studies were nominated by researchers, technical experts, and the public.

702 studies were screened for potential WWC reviews.*

272 studies had unclear or uncoded design, 205 had a design with no comparison group, 124 were quasi-experimental designs (QEDs), and 101 studies were randomized controlled trials (RCTs).

338 studies were conducted outside of the United States, 191 were conducted in the US, and 173 did not have an identified location.

343 studies had unclear or uncoded connection to distance learning, 208 of the studies expressly focused on distance learning, while 151 of the screened studies did not focus on distance learning.

305 studies had a sample that included students. Of those 305 studies 173 focused on postsecondary students (including post-graduates), 42 focused on middle schoolers, 36 focused on high schoolers, 32 focused on elementary students, 20 included students in mixed education levels, and 2 focused on pre-kindergarteners.

35 of the screened studies were prioritized for full WWC reviews. Among other topics, these include studies on intelligent tutoring to support literacy development, technology-assisted learning for postsecondary chemistry, online math courses for grades K-5, and online interventions to develop time management skills.

*The studies that were not screened are studies that aren’t listed in ERIC.