# Criteria for Determining Whether a Strategy Has an Evidence Base

| Level of Evidence | ESSA Definition a, b | WWC Practice Guide Recommendation b, c | Related WWC Ratings and Study Characterizations a, b |
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| ***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](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks), AND based on a large sample and a multi-site 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](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks), AND based on a large sample and a multi-site sample. |
| ***Promising evidence*** | Supported by statistically significant and positive findings from one or more correlational studies with statistical control 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](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks). | Does Not Meet WWC Standards, OR ineligible for WWC review, OR not reviewed under version 2.1 or higher of the WWC [Handbook](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Handbooks), OR based on a sample that is not a large sample and a multi-site 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. |

a Definitions adapted from [*Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments*](https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/guidanceuseseinvestment.pdf).

b Definitions adapted from U.S. Department of Education [*Definitions and Selection Criteria that Apply to Direct Grant Programs*](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/07/31/2017-15989/definitions-and-selection-criteria-that-apply-to-direct-grant-programs).

c Definitions adapted from [*Teaching Strategies for Improving Algebra Knowledge in Middle & High School: Level of Evidence*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27poYdVXQUk).

*This handout was prepared under Contract ED-IES-17-C-0005 by Regional Educational Laboratory Central, administered by Marzano Research. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.*