# 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  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***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).

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