

Promising ESSA Evidence

How to Detect a High-Quality Correlational Study

Correlational Study

A study qualifies as a Promising ESSA study if it is a well-designed and implemented correlational study that demonstrates statistically significant positive results, and is based on a relevant, large, and multi-site sample.



Publication Date

When was the study conducted? When was it published? Studies completed more than 3-5 years ago are likely obsolete.



Implementation

Was the program or intervention implemented with fidelity? If a program is not implemented well or utilized with fidelity, the measured impact may be reduced.



Sample Size

How many students, schools, or districts were included in the study? With a larger number of students, the study is more likely to find the true effect.



Relevant Assessment

Which assessment was used for the evaluation? Chosen assessments should evaluate the same topics or principles that the tool or program was proposed to have impacted.



Attrition

How many students were originally recruited for the study but were not analyzed? What was the reason for the loss of students? If this number is large, the results may be compromised or biased.



Positive Effect

Were statistically significant and positive effects observed? Results from the study should demonstrate that the program or intervention is producing a good and meaningful impact.



Baseline Equivalence

If a control group was used, were the two study groups (treatment and control) similar? Comparing groups that differ based on demographic characteristics or ability level creates results in biased results.



Research Method

Did the evaluation focus solely on a treatment group, or was a treatment group compared to a control group? Comparison to a control group provides meaning and scale to the program or intervention effect.