

Continuum of Evidence

A rubric for determining the level of evidence for any given educational practice

STEP 1: Locate the literature that examines/discusses the effectiveness of the practice

STEP 2: Determine whether sufficient quantity of evidence of effectiveness exists to proceed

	Evidence-Based Practices		
		Research-Based Practices	Scientifically-Based Practices
No Evidence	“Promising Evidence”	“Probable Evidence”	“Pure Evidence”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practices not based on theory or research • No original data have been collected • No <i>anecdotal evidence</i> exists • No <i>professional wisdom</i> or consensus exists • New practices or programs that have not been tried or have not been effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practices not based on theory or research • Original data have not been collected • <i>Anecdotal evidence</i> and <i>professional wisdom</i> exists • Practitioners have tried these practices and feel they are effective • New practices or programs that have not yet been researched 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practices developed based on theory or research • An <i>insufficient amount of original data</i> have been collected • May have been studied but not using rigorous study designs • Practices researched on a different population or in different contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original data have been collected to determine effectiveness • Research focused on the target population and context • <i>Tested empirically</i> using <i>rigorous research methods</i> that ensure reproducible and applicable results
Re-consider the use of these practices	Use these practices sparingly or in <i>special cases</i>	Use these practices as supplemental strategies	Use these practices as your “<i>first course of treatment</i>”

Definitions

Anecdotal evidence: Practitioner or student notation of the success of a practice. Notations can include classroom research, reflections, student evaluations, etc.

First course of treatment: A medical term referring to the practice that is chosen first because it has been shown to be most effective with the average population.

Insufficient amount of original data: A sufficient amount of data is debatable. According to CEC a sufficient amount of data includes at least 1 strong and 1 moderately strong experimental/quasi-experimental study from 2 different research teams OR at least 5 single subject studies from 3 different research teams OR at least 4 strong correlation studies from 2 different research teams. Anything less would be considered an insufficient amount of data.

Professional wisdom: Wisdom is derived from experience. Often professional wisdom is documented in peer-reviewed position papers and/or endorsements by professional organizations.

Rigorous research methods: Research that employs systematic and empirical testing, uses careful selection and assessment of participants, involves data analysis adequate to support general findings, is presented in sufficient detail, obtains acceptance by a peer-reviewed journal, and uses research designs and methods appropriate to the research questions.

Special Cases: There are times when the -based strategies are ineffective with a given student or group of students. Practices with promising evidence can be tried in order to engage students who do not respond to other strategies.

Tested empirically: The relationship between the variables was tested using a form of measurement or observation