

Types of Research Methods

Evidence of effectiveness	Method	This is ...	This works best for these kinds of questions...	This doesn't work well for these kinds of questions...	Additional Things to Note
LOW 	Descriptive-Qualitative (Ethnography/ Case Study)	In-depth examination of specific situation(s) using interviews, observations, document review You measure things as they are.	How do people implement this program? What challenges do people face? What are people's perceptions?	Did the program cause any changes in participants' outcomes?	
	Descriptive-Quantitative	Numerical description (frequency, average) You measure things as they are.	How many people are participating in this program? What are the characteristics of people in this program? How well did participants in this program do?	Did the program cause any changes in participants' outcomes? Why did the program work this way?	
	Correlational/Regression Analyses	Quantitative analyses of relationships between two or more things (often used to analyze results from other designs)	What is the relationship between two different things such as homework and science achievement? How likely is it that participation in the program will lead to better outcomes?	Did the program cause any changes in participants' outcomes? How did people implement this program?	Look for words, such as, more likely than, less likely than, associated with, related to, and correlated with.
	Quasi-experimental	Giving two groups different experiences (e.g., one receives the intervention and one does not)— no random assignment	Did the program cause any changes in participants' outcomes?	How are people implementing the program? Why did the program get the results it did?	Look for the phrase "compared with."

Adapted from Edvantia SBR Rating for Technical Assistance Programs and Services form (2007) and Carter McNamara Overview of Methods to Collect Information handout (1998)

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 HIGH	Experimental	Giving two groups different experiences (e.g., one receives the intervention and one does not)—random assignment	Did the program cause any changes in participants' outcomes?	How are people implementing the program?	Look for words, such as, causes or leads to. NOTES: The intervention should be clearly defined. You should be able to tell who developed it, who used it, how much it cost, how it differed from what the control group received. Was there any way for the random assignment process to be compromised? Did the study test the equivalence of treatment and control groups prior to the intervention?
	Meta-analysis	Analysis of multiple studies to determine average impact across the studies	Did the program cause any changes in participants' outcomes? What is the range of outcomes a program can have?	How are people implementing the program? What are people's perceptions?	Look for selection criteria used for study and measures of effect size.

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