

Webinar Transcript

Using Databases and Clearinghouses

Updated: September 2019

Slide #1:

Welcome to today's webinar: Using Databases and Clearinghouses. This webinar is brought to you by District 180 in the Office of Continuous Improvement and Support at the Kentucky Department of Education.

Slide #2:

The agenda for this webinar is on the screen. We will begin with a brief overview of evidence-based practices under ESSA before moving on to a discussion of the pros and cons of evidence clearinghouses. Then we will explore ways to access and use academic databases to find original research.

Slide #3:

Here are our objectives for today: By the end of this webinar, you will be able to:

- describe the pros and cons of using clearinghouses to find information about new interventions and strategies, and
- explain the best practices for using academic databases to find useful research.

Slide #4:

Before we get started, let's take a moment to consider why these skills are necessary. In 2015, the US Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act through a bill known as the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA for short. One of the requirements of ESSA is that school improvement initiatives and initiatives paid for with federal funds be rooted in "evidence-based activities, strategies, or interventions." These provisions encourage the use of tested and proven best practices in our classrooms and schools.

Slide #5:

The Office of Continuous Improvement and Support at the Kentucky Department of Education has provided a variety of resources to help you further your understanding of ESSA's evidence-based practice provisions. For more detailed information, please review the other webinars in this series, the titles of which are listed on the screen. You can also visit KDE's evidence-based practices website which has been hyperlinked in the PowerPoint for your convenience.

Slide #6:

We will begin our discussion today with a review of evidence clearinghouses.

Slide #7:

Clearinghouses are tools that provide independent evaluations of the research related to programs, practices, and interventions. Think of them as the “consumer reports” of educational programming. They take in all the available information about a practice and condense it into a user friendly form. There are many clearinghouses available on the web, but three common ones are the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), Evidence for ESSA, and The Campbell Collaborative. KDE keeps a running list of clearinghouses that is posted on the evidence-based practices webpage. The list is also hyperlinked in the PowerPoint.

Slide #8:

As with any website, clearinghouses have a variety of pros and cons. Clearinghouses are extremely user friendly and synthesize research into easily digestible reports. They typically include useful tools that support the filtering of results or the ranking of practices by various quality factors. They are also widely available and free to access, which makes them a useful tool for educators.

However, clearinghouses can have their drawbacks. They are far from comprehensive, meaning that you may have to explore multiple clearinghouses to get a full picture of the potential impact of a program, practice, or strategy. Clearinghouses are also self-governed, meaning that they have vastly different standards for inclusion and quality. This causes different clearinghouses to report different results for the same intervention. Clearinghouses may also reflect organizational or review bias.

Slide #9:

When using clearinghouses to complete your evidence review, here are a few best practices to consider. First, check to see that research is cited and referenced in the discussion. Some clearinghouses rely more on testimonials than on research. While these reports can be valuable they are not going to be compliant with ESSA. Next, you will want to read the report with a critical eye and scan for bias. As you’re reading, be sure to pay careful attention to the scope and methods of implementation discussed in the report. Often times, research only supports the use of a practice with a specific group of students or under certain circumstances. We want to be aware of those specifics when we design our own implementation plans. Finally, you should review reports from multiple clearinghouses, if available. Different organizations may have a different take on the effectiveness of a strategy.

Slide #10:

Let’s take a look at the most common clearinghouse, the What Works Clearinghouse, or WWC. Most clearinghouses are set up in a fashion similar to this. You will find a variety of topics on the homepage, as well as some information or news related to the clearinghouse itself. When we click a topic, we will be redirected to search results related to that topic.

Slide #11:

This page lists all of the programs that have been reviewed by the WWC. In the top left corner, you will find a button that lets you apply student demographic filters. The headings across the top allow us to easily rank and sort the interventions.

Slide #12:

When we select an intervention to review, you will find a short explanation of how the intervention works. At the bottom you will see an overview of the research that was used to determine the impact of the intervention. On WWC, the Intervention Report provides a highly detailed summary of the research. Most clearinghouses offer a similar report.

Slide #13:

When you open the Intervention Report, you will see that it opens in a standard PDF reader, allowing you to download or print the report for your records.

Slide #14:

While academic databases are not as user friendly as clearinghouses, they provide a trusted source of high quality research that can be used to inform educational decision making.

Slide #15:

An academic database is a resource that offers a collection of research and writing that has been archived from academic journals. Unlike the evidence clearinghouses discussed earlier, databases provide access to direct reports of the results of research. They typically include rigorous peer review procedures and have very high standards for inclusion. Unfortunately, databases typically require a paid subscription.

Slide #16:

There are many trusted databases available to educators. The Education Resources Information Center, or ERIC, is a free database that archives articles from most educational research journals. Kentucky educators also have access to 62 different academic databases through the Kentucky Virtual Library (KVL). You can create a free account through KVL on their website. Educators may find the following databases as useful places to start: Academic Search Complete, Teacher Resource Center, NoveList, and Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection.

Slide #17:

Let's take a look at some pros and cons of academic databases. Academic databases provide a comprehensive listing of research that is pulled directly from journal articles. This means you receive the information directly from the researcher without any additional reviewer bias. However, databases often require a subscription for use and are not always very user friendly.

The comprehensive nature of databases can also make the results of a search feel very overwhelming.

Slide #18:

Here are a few best practices related to the use of academic databases. First, you will want to create clear search terms. Databases are not as user friendly as a Google search engine. You must be very clear about what you are looking for. To narrow the results list, researchers will often apply a wide variety of filters. This helps to get the results down to a manageable level. If you are struggling to find relevant articles, you can use quotation marks or a plus sign to group words or phrases together. Finally, the key to successfully navigating a database is a patient and open mind. Not every article is going to give you the information that you want, so this step can take a little time.

Slide #19:

Let's consider these best practices using the EBSCOhost search engine you see on the screen. EBSCOhost is a common search engine that is deployed by many different databases. Here, we are using EBSCOhost to explore the Academic Search Complete database.

The first thing we want to do is enter our search term into the search bar. I have entered the term "co-teaching". Next, you will want to apply search filters. The Full Text and Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals filters are always a good bet. You may also want to limit the publication age range by setting the date. It is common practice to use research that was conducted within the last ten years when making educational decisions.

Slide #20:

After I click search, I get a results page that looks like this. You can see that my search bar has moved to the top left corner, and my filters have moved to a column on the left. I can change these to refine my search results without having to go back to the homepage. This search found 74 articles that are relevant to co-teaching, and it is showing me the first ten on this page. When I find a title that interests me, I can click the title for more detailed publication information, or I can click the "PDF Full Text" button to be taken directly to the article.

Slide #21:

You can see that the article opens in a standard PDF viewer. At this point I can read the article, or print or download the article with the buttons in the upper right corner.

Slide #22:

Here are a few tips to help you in your search. First, try different search terms to get different results. For example, if you are looking for research on the program Read 180, the search term Read 180 will return a different set of results than the search term "computer based reading programs." Try both of them and see what you get. Just like the clearinghouses, you should

review multiple pieces of literature on a subject and allow the full body of literature to inform your decision. Finally, don't forget to evaluate the quality of literature against ESSA's definition of evidence. These definitions are available on KDE's evidence-based practices website.

Slide #23:

Thank you for taking time to review this webinar. During this webinar we have provided a brief review of ESSA's evidence-based practice provisions, a discussion on the pros and cons of clearinghouse use, and some practical tips for accessing and searching databases.

Slide #24:

If you have questions regarding evidence-based interventions or database use, please contact the District 180 branch in the Office of Continuous Improvement and Support at (502) 564-2116.

References and Resources

[KDE's Evidence-based Practices Webpage](#)

[Kentucky Virtual Library Educator Portal](#)

[Education Resources Information Center \(ERIC\)](#)

[KDE's Clearinghouse and Database List](#)