MODULE 3 HANDOUT

How strong is the evidence, and what can you claim

The study design sets the highest tier possible. A review, the sample, and overlap with your school decide the tier you write in the ESSA Level of Evidence field.

Key ideas

- Only strong (Tier 1), moderate (Tier 2), and promising (Tier 3) count for the IPG.
- Strong and moderate need a supporting What Works Clearinghouse review and at least 350 students across more than one site. Strong also needs your students and setting to match the study's; moderate needs one of the two.
- Promising needs a named study with a statistically significant, positive effect.
- The rubric scores all three levels the same, so the safer claim costs no points.
- Take tiers from studies and clearinghouses, never from vendor materials.

The claim check

1. **Design.** What design was the study, and did it find a significant, positive effect? This sets the highest tier possible.
2. **Review.** Does the most recent WWC review support this finding? If no, claim Tier 3.
3. **Sample.** Did the study include at least 350 students across more than one site? If no, claim Tier 3.
4. **Overlap.** Do the studied students and setting match yours? Both: up to Tier 1. One: up to Tier 2. Neither: Tier 3.
5. **Claim** the lowest result and name the study.

Your claims

Candidate (menu ID)	Study named	Design	WWC review?	Sample (students, sites)	Overlap (students, setting)	Tier to claim	Reason for any step down

Worked example: Check & Connect (DRP-01)

Field	Entry
Study named	Sinclair et al. (1998) and Sinclair, Christenson & Thurlow (2005), randomized trials
WWC review	Yes: Intervention Report (2015); Evidence Snapshot 78 displays Tier 3
Sample	238 students in all, one district (Minneapolis)
Outcome covered	Staying in school and progressing in school; not completing school or attendance
Tier to claim	Tier 3 (promising)
Reason	Under 350 students and only one district

Where this fits in the toolkit

Use the T6 worksheet: the Step 1 tier filter and the "Tier to claim" field both use the menu's tier-to-claim column. Run the overlap check yourself for your grades and setting. Next, Module 4 starts from your root cause and the outcome you need to move.

Sources: ESEA Section 8101(21); 34 CFR 77.1; ED, Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments (2023); SYS IPG EBI Menu FINAL (October 20, 2026).