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INTERVENTION, EVALUATION, AND POLICY STUDIES

Benchmarks for Expected Annual Academic Growth for Students in the Bottom Quartile of the Normative Distribution

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Abstract

Effect sizes are commonly reported for the results of educational interventions. However, researchers struggle with interpreting their magnitude in a way that transcends generic guidelines. Effect sizes can be interpreted in a meaningful context by benchmarking them against typical growth for students in the normative distribution. Such benchmarks are not currently available for students in the bottom quartile. This report remedies this by providing a comparative context for interventions involving these students. Annual growth effect sizes for K–12 students were computed from nationally normed assessments and a longitudinal study of students in special education. They reveal declining growth over time, especially for reading and math. These results allow researchers to better interpret the effects of their interventions and help practitioners by quantifying typical growth for struggling students. More

longitudinal research is needed to show growth trajectories for students in the bottom quartile.

Keywords:

Effect sizes | education evaluation | low-performing students

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