

How does Harmony Academy meet the evidence for Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Tiers of Evidence?

The Harmony Curriculum meets Tier 3 (Promising) [levels of evidence](#) as defined by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). [DeLay and colleagues \(2016\)](#) conducted a quasi-experimental study of the Harmony Curriculum (Lessons and Activities and Everyday Practices) with 631 fifth grade students across six schools in one southwestern school district. The sample included a diverse group of students, including 58% European American, 8.9% Hispanic/Latino, 8.0% Asian American, 3.1% African American, 1.2% Native American, and 18.3% multi-racial, with no pre-test differences across demographics (except parental education) and student outcomes. DeLay and colleagues found that students participating in Harmony reported significantly more diverse friends (by ethnicity and academic performance) than did those from the control group. Furthermore, improved peer connection with diverse peers were related to improved writing and math performance (as measured by grades) in classrooms using Harmony, but not in control classrooms.

Further, [Miller and colleagues \(2017\)](#) conducted a quasi-experimental study (Lessons and Activities and Everyday Practices) with 627 fifth-grade students across six schools in one southwestern school district. The sample included a diverse group of students, including 55.5% European American, 9.4% Hispanic/Latino, 8.0% Asian American, 3.8% African American, 1.1% Native American, and 17.7% multi-racial; and majority (65.5%) had parents who had some or all college. Pre-test differences existed among several demographic and outcome variables and were accounted for as co-variables in the analysis. Miller and colleagues found that students who participated in the Harmony program liked school more, felt a greater sense of classroom identification and inclusion, were perceived by teachers to be less aggressive, and performed better academically (by overall mean grades) than students who were in control classrooms.

In a randomized control trial conducted with four schools and 346 fourth graders in a southwestern school district, [Xiao and colleagues \(2023\)](#) tested the effects of implementing Harmony's Everyday Practice on student prosocial behaviors toward other-gendered peers. The sample included a diverse group of students, including 54.9% European American, 10.1% Hispanic/Latino, 2.0% Asian American, 1.7% Black, .3% Native American, and 12.4% other; and many students (48.6%) had parents who were college graduates or had obtained higher education. No differences existed between intervention and control groups at baseline on demographic factors or prosocial behavior toward other gender peers. Xiao and colleagues found that those students who participated in Harmony Everyday Practices had significantly higher other-gender prosocial behavior than those in the control group.

In another quasi-experimental design with 140 prekindergarten students across 8 classrooms, [Hanish and colleagues \(2022\)](#) tested the effects of Buddy Up on quality of peer interactions. The sample included children around 4 years of age and included predominately Latinx students (with most students identifying as Mexican or Mexican American, 77.9%), and the remainder were African American (5.7%) and White (4.3%). The majority of children were also Spanish speaking in school (37.1%) or bilingual (15%). Latinx students were overrepresented in the treatment schools compared to control; however, language, gender, and age were similar across intervention and control. Hanish and colleagues found that prekindergarten students who participated in Buddy Up had better quality interactions when engaging in both other-gender dyads and same-gender dyads (notably girl-girl-dyads).

Along with experimental and quasi-experimental designs, Morrison and colleagues (2019, 2021) conducted a longitudinal, mixed methods study of 20 Harmony elementary schools in Southern California. Data from surveys and focus groups with teachers, and observations suggested Harmony

positively influenced student social and emotional skills (i.e., respect for one another, empathy for others, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, self-management, and self-awareness). They also found that students noted improvements in themselves and their peers, and their perceptions of the climate in their schools seemed to be shifting upward. They further found that as schools moved from their first to their second year of Harmony implementation, students were more likely to express that their peers respected one another, behaved well in class, helped one another learn, and were treated well regardless of their race or background.