# Research Methods in Career and Technical Education: Randomized Controlled Trials

## Video Transcript

Randomized controlled trials, or RCTs, are a frequently used research method. RCTs are perhaps best known for testing medication effectiveness. They can also determine the impact of an education program or policy.

### How do RCTs work?

Researchers randomly split individuals into two groups. One is enrolled in a particular program while the other is not. Researchers then compare outcomes to determine any effects.

Random assignment is a crucial part of this method. It helps researchers precisely identify any effects of the program.

RCTs can be challenging to undertake. Only a few RCTs have been conducted in career and technical education (CTE).

One well-known RCT is MDRC's study on career academies. Researchers followed the academy group and the control group for 8 years. Earnings for academy males increased compared to non-academy males. Because the groups were randomly assigned, we know these effects are causal. There were no effects on education outcomes.

There's a need for more rigorous research, like RCTs, in the field of CTE. The CTE Research Network is conducting and promoting such research. We seek to expand the evidence base on what works in CTE and to strengthen the field's capacity to conduct and use CTE research.

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