

TABLE 1.1

Summary of Research Designs

		DESCRIPTIVE	CORRELATIONAL	EXPERIMENTAL	QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL
RESEARCHER'S QUESTIONS	DEFINITION	To systematically explain a situation factually and accurately.	To assess how changes in one variable correspond with changes in another variable.	To establish a cause–effect relationship between variables.	To infer a cause–effect relationship between variables when the researchers cannot manipulate the independent variable.
	QUESTIONS	What percentage of students passed a state mastery test? Does the percentage differ by grade level or socioeconomic status?	To what extent are reading achievement scores correlated with socioeconomic status? How are science project scores correlated with parents' level of interest in science?	How is third-grade reading achievement affected by classroom reading-training? (Researchers randomly assign students into two groups, one with reading-training and one without, and then compare scores on reading achievement tests.)	How is third-grade reading achievement affected by classroom reading-training? (Researchers study two existing classrooms at the same school, one with reading-training and one without, and then compare scores on reading achievement tests.)
	LIMITATIONS	Cannot show connections between different variables.	Can show connections between variables, but cannot prove one variable causes changes in the other.	Requires random assignment into experimental and control groups, which is often not possible.	Can show connections between variables and even infer causation, but cannot confirm that the results were due solely to the independent variable.