

Assessment Types and Their Key Differences

	Classroom	Large-scale, system-level assessment		Examinations
		National	International	
Purpose	To provide immediate feedback to inform classroom instruction	To provide feedback on the overall health of the system at particular grade/age level(s), and to monitor trends in learning	To provide feedback on the comparative performance of the education system at particular grade/age level(s)	To select or certify students as they move from one level of the education system to the next (or into the workforce)
Frequency	Daily	For individual subjects offered on a regular basis (such as every 3-5 years)	For individual subjects offered on a regular basis (such as every 3-5 years)	Annually and more often where the system allows for repeats
Who is tested?	All students	Sample or census of students at a particular grade or age level(s)	A sample of students at a particular grade or age level(s)	All eligible students
Format	Varies from observation to questioning to paper-and-pencil tests to student performances	Usually multiple choice and short answer	Usually multiple choice and short answer	Usually essay and multiple choice
Coverage of curriculum	All subject areas	Generally confined to a few subjects	Generally confined to one or two subjects	Covers main subject areas
Additional information collected from students?	Yes, as part of the teaching process	Frequently	Yes	Seldom
Scoring	Usually informal and simple	Varies from simple to more statistically sophisticated techniques	Usually involves statistically sophisticated techniques	Varies from simple to more statistically sophisticated techniques

Source: Clarke, M. 2012. "What Matters Most for Student Assessment Systems: A Framework Paper." SABER-Student Assessment Working Paper Series. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

