

Types of K-12 Student Learning Assessments

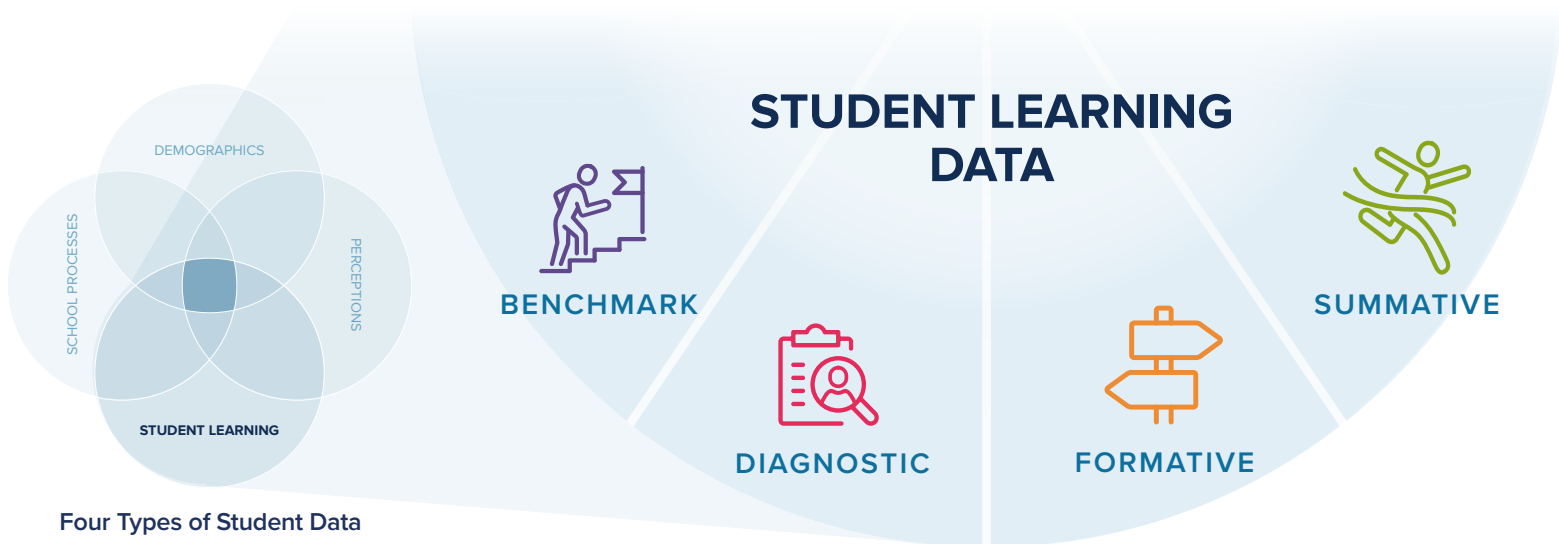


Assessing student learning is essential to effective instruction! Assessment is a fundamental practice providing valuable information that informs, supports and measures student achievement and growth. When teachers are engaged in effectively assessing student learning, they are able to reflect on and adjust their own practice and therefore enhance their own professional growth as well!

This resource is intended to provide detailed information about the types of student learning assessments, their purpose, and offer a few examples of student learning assessments in each category. *(Please note: assessments provided are examples only and are not meant to be inclusive lists.)*

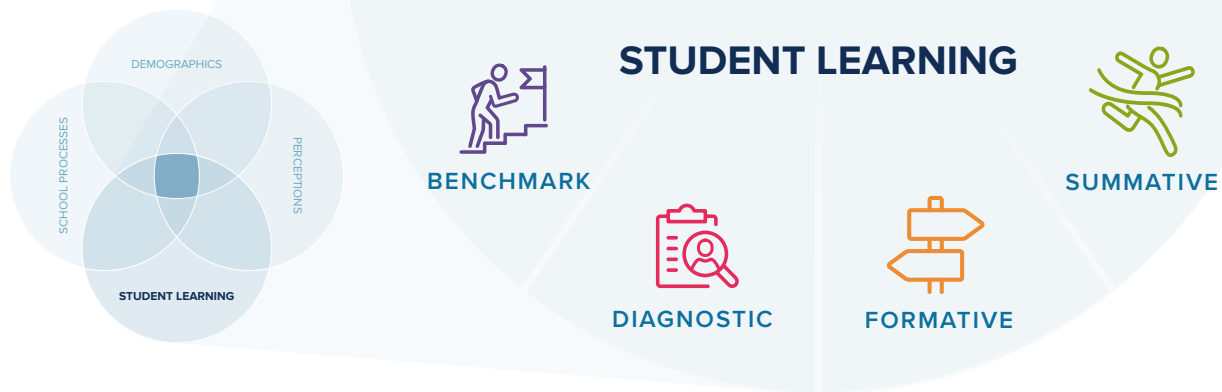
BACKGROUND:

Bernhardt (1998) identifies four types of data that are useful to schools – demographic data, perception data, process data, and student learning data. The Student Learning data that can be captured by schools is further categorized into **four distinct types**:



Four Types of Student Data

Bernhardt, V. L., (1998, March). Invited Monograph No. 4. CASCD https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/curriculum/pdf/multiple_measures.pdf



Let’s dig in on the four types of student learning assessments and their key characteristics:



Benchmark Assessments:

“Where are we?”

Benchmark assessments are formally defined as assessments that measure progress towards an end of year desired outcome. They are typically administered three times per year, at beginning (BOY), middle (MOY), and end of year (EOY). A benchmark assessment can serve as a universal screener as well, as they surface data on students who score below the benchmark.



Diagnostic Assessments:

“What do we need?”

Diagnostic assessments are given to pinpoint students’ levels of knowledge, skills, and understandings to inform the planning and delivery of instruction, including instructional support and intervention needs. Typically, students who are not meeting benchmarks, or have evidence of falling behind an expected level of performance, are given a diagnostic assessment to further determine specific areas of need. A diagnostic assessment is typically not graded/evaluated with letter grade, percentage or performance measure.



Formative Assessments:

“Along the way”





Formative assessments confirm that learning has or has not occurred. They provide the teacher with information to plan continued instruction. Formative assessments assist the student in reflecting on their own learning. Formative assessments can be both formal and informal. They can be thought of as “along the way” assessments leading to summative assessments and are not typically graded/evaluated, but instead “inform” instruction.



Summative Assessments:

“At the gate”

Summative assessments evaluate student learning at the end of a specific period of instruction, which can be a unit or chapter, a quarter, a semester, or the end of the year. These are considered “at the gate” assessments that are typically graded with letter grades or percentages or some overall rating to “sum up” the learning during the defined window of time.

	 BENCHMARK	 DIAGNOSTIC	 FORMATIVE	 SUMMATIVE
Examples <i>(Examples are not limited to those listed here.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firefly from PDE • Acadience®/DIBELS Next® • Aimsweb® • DIBELS® 8 • MAP® • STAR Math • STAR Reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Diagnostic Tool (CDT) from PDE • Core Phonics Survey • i-Ready® Diagnostic and Growth Monitoring • MAP® • PALS • Reading Rockets • TOWRE • STAR Math • STAR Reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAS Assessment Center from PDE • Exit tickets • Pre-tests • Progress Checklists • Questioning • Technology tools (Kahoot, etc.) • Formal progress monitoring probes (e.g. Acadience® progress monitoring, aimsweb®, Curriculum Based Measures) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit/chapter tests • Quizzes • Performance tasks/projects • Mid-terms/Final exams • ACCESS for ELLs • NOCTI/NIMS • SAT, ACT, PSAT • Advanced Placement (AP) • PSSA/Keystone Exams
Frequency/Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3x/year (BOY, MOY, EOY) • All students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As needed, typically 2 to 3x/year • CDT typically 3x/yr, but as much as 5x/year if warranted • Typically given to students who are targeted for tiered supports but can be used with all students (ex: CDT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily: before, during and after instruction • All students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of unit • End of course • End of year • All Students
Questions Answered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are students mastering PA Core Standards? • Are there specific students exceeding the benchmark? • Which students are not on track with meeting PA Core Standards/established benchmarks? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are an individual student's strengths and needs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective was my instruction/lesson? • What should happen next in my instruction? • Do I need to reteach before moving on? • Which students are in need of scaffolding, differentiation, reteaching? • Is a student's intervention working? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well did students learn the content taught? • Which students are falling behind and in need of additional supports?

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More resources on this topic at pa.gov/education >