

Pros and Cons of Common Data-Collection Tools

Tool	Pros	Cons
<p>Survey An instrument used to collect information from an individual either in person or in written or digital format.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standardized • easy to administer to a large number of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficult to ensure desired response rate • difficult to capture nuance • time-consuming to analyze open-ended responses • dependent on potentially unreliable self-reporting
<p>Administrative Record Documentation capturing data used to manage services and comply with reporting regulations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standardized • reliable, permitting apples-to-apples comparisons across individuals and sites • indicative of trends over time and across different sites, groups of people, individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • susceptible to overestimation of accuracy and objectivity • limited to a small number of factors that may be weak proxies for the complex information needed
<p>Standardized Assessment A tool that uses the same questions and is scored in a consistent way to evaluate the quality or ability of someone or something</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standardized • reliable, permitting apples-to-apples comparisons across individuals and sites • indicative of trends over time and across different sites, groups of people, individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • susceptible to overestimation of objectivity and fairness • limited to a set of factors or items that may be weak proxies for the complex information needed
<p>Rubric An evaluation tool used to measure attainment against a consistent set of standards or criteria, often used in conjunction with observations and conversations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • closely linked to criteria of interest, including complex criteria • useful to practitioners as a way to define and provide actionable feedback on how to meet quality standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time-consuming to administer • dependent on inter-rater norming to achieve reliability
<p>Student Work Completed assignments, products, and projects, demonstrating what students have learned</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flexible, allowing close linkage to criteria of interest • useful in measuring complex learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time-consuming to develop, link to criteria of interest, and administer • susceptible to unreliably subjective assessment, absent norming across many educators