

PISA (*Programme of International Student Assessment*): AN OVERVIEW

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PISA is an international comparative study which assesses students' competences at age 15. Since 2000, it is administered every three-years in the OECD member countries and a group of partner countries.

PISA evaluates the extent to which youngsters near the end of compulsory education have acquired some of the knowledge, understanding and skills that will be essential for their personal and professional lives.

The survey intends to assess not solely whether students can reproduce what they have learned, but also to examine how well they can extrapolate from what they have learned and apply their knowledge in novel settings. School contexts are also analyzed through data collected from students' and headteachers' perceptions.

Although comparing and ranking country performance is an outstanding feature, PISA's main goals are to estimate trends within countries over time and to orientate education policies.

The study focuses on three core areas: reading, mathematics and science. In each edition, one of the three areas is considered as the main domain; the last survey (2009) focused on reading. A new option to measure student reading competence on electronic texts has been recently developed (ERA, *Electronic Reading Assessment*). Spain has participated in all cycles and also has pioneered this new approach. Next PISA edition (2012) will focus on mathematics, whose theoretical framework is currently being discussed.

<http://www.institutodeevaluacion.mec.es/>