

# Valuing Inclusive Teaching and Learning (VITAL) Toolkit

Learning Environment Observation  
and Teacher Reflection

**HOW MIGHT WE USE THE VITAL TOOLKIT?**





## HOW MIGHT WE USE THE SCHOOLS2030 VITAL TOOLKIT?

### How and when might we use the Schools2030 VITAL Toolkit?

#### AS PART OF THE SCHOOLS2030 THREE-STEP PROCESS

The Schools2030 VITAL Learning Environment Observation and Teacher Reflection Toolkit is to be used throughout the key stages of Schools2030 3-step process, namely ASSESS, DESIGN, and SHOWCASE, as indicated below.



- Assess the learning environment at the beginning of the year: **data on all behaviours.**
- Provide feedback to teachers.
- Analyse data by school, cohort, teacher, country.
- Prepare Reports/ Presentations
- Prepare country and teacher summaries.

#### HCD Workshops:

- Reflect on the data from learning environment assessments.
- Reflect on own teaching practices/ behaviours.
- Include learning environment considerations at each HCD phase.
- Select 2-3 teaching practices that align with micro-innovation.

#### Implementation:

- Mentoring, tracking, formative assessment. **2 additional observations on selected teaching practices.**

- Assess the learning environment at end of the year: **data on all behaviours.**
- Analyse changes in student and teacher practices at the school, cohort, teacher and country levels.
- Selected videos of improved practice and teacher views.
- Student responses to better learning environments.

#### TO CONDUCT OBSERVATIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Conduct classroom observations and teacher reflections throughout the year as part of the Schools2030 Three-Step process as follows:



### The Focus of the Observations throughout the Academic Year



- a. **At the beginning of the academic year:** before the human-centred design workshops commence, observe classrooms to **assess** the extent to which teachers create supportive inclusive learning environments and practise effective teaching and learning strategies. **Observe all 8 dimensions and 37 behaviours** and provide feedback to teachers. Analyse data and prepare visualisations to be used in the HCD workshops and reflections.
- b. **During the human-centred design process:** use the learning environment evidence to inform the creation of micro-solutions to address learning gaps for the relevant age cohort. All stages of the HCD process will involve reflecting on one's own teaching and learning practices in the classroom. While designing micro-innovations to improve holistic learning outcomes, teachers will have gone through the process to select two to three behaviours linked to their micro-solution that they wish to focus on for improvement.
  - b. **During the middle of the year:** while teachers implement and iterate their micro-innovations, mentors will also support teachers on improving the two to three teaching practices that they selected during the HCD process. **Observe teachers at least two times during the year on their selected practices** to give them feedback, mentoring and support to reflect on and improve the selected practices.
- c. **At the end of the year:** conduct a final observation **of all 8 dimensions and 37 behaviours**, to determine any changes in teaching and student behaviour and learning. Improvement in the selected behaviours may well impact other behaviours.
- d. If possible additional data in the form of videos, teacher reflections and student responses to changes in the learning environment could also be collected and used in **showcasing** any improvements. When showcasing learning improvement, include the evidence from learning environment assessments which have impacted learning.

### WITHIN WORKSHOPS AND EDUCATION COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

The VITAL toolkit could also be used for workshops at school or cluster level for e.g., education communities of practice meetings to focus on improving certain dimensions or teaching and learning practices. Facilitators could include the use of videos and/or actual classroom observations to help participants understand what good practice looks like and how teachers can improve their practice.



## How might we Contextualise the VITAL Toolkit?

The VITAL Toolkit can be contextualised and adapted to your country context to meet the vision of Schools2030 of achieving better holistic learning outcomes for all children. In contextualisation and adapting, please consider the following:

1. Engage stakeholders such as teachers, head teachers, government officials, students and parents.
2. Place this within your national standards and curriculum: review the Toolkit against your national curriculum and any national education standards your country may have to make sure the essentials are included, and any additional behaviours that may need to be included.
3. Re-define the behaviour: define what in your context best demonstrates the desired dimension and behaviour e.g., what would effective practice in creating a positive emotional climate, or respect for diversity look like in your country context? What does 'critical thinking' mean in your community context (e.g., see Giacomazzi et al. 2022).
4. Review the behaviours within each dimension – decide whether you wish to retain them all or whether there are some that are particularly pertinent to your context that you would like to focus on. Is there anything critically missing for you? **Please aim to retain each dimension** if you reduce the number of behaviours. Some behaviours may seem repetitious but are important to ensure that each dimension can stand on its own, if selected as a focus for improvement.
5. Make adaptations: You may wish to include any factors relating to the school physical environment by way of background information e.g., classroom furniture, electricity, water and sanitation, ventilation etc., even though these are beyond the control of the teacher. The Observation Form has optional sections which you can use and adapt, including a section on identifying children with disabilities/special educational needs.
6. Add contextually relevant examples: You may wish to include examples pertinent to your contexts for e.g. large classes, dealing with students with challenging behaviour, tackling student disinterest, bullying based on prejudice, teacher use of harsh language or physical punishment, and supporting children with a range of disabilities. There may be more specific things that you would like to see at the primary or secondary levels.
7. Contextually relevant examples for the four levels: As you gain experience, add contextually relevant examples for each of the four levels observed, related to your national curriculum. By way of example if a teacher is not respecting students (1.1. level 1), what examples do you see in your contexts relating to what the teacher says, thinks and does? When you see a classroom in which the teacher is showing very good practice in respecting students (1.1. level 4), what does s/he do that shows they are clearly respecting all students in the classroom? You could then begin to develop a collection of contextual practices that fit within each level.



This may be particularly relevant in certain contexts e.g. what does ‘adjusts teaching’ or ‘responds to students’ needs’ look like when the class size is 100 students or more? Or when there are students with a wide range of abilities or special educational needs? Or what does ‘integrates a respect for diversity’ mean when there are clear tribal or colour-based prejudices exhibited in the classroom? Or when the learners seem to come from homogenous backgrounds?

8. Link certain behaviours to your learning domains: You may wish to link certain behaviours to the learning domains that your country is focusing on at the primary and secondary levels.
9. Collect videos and photos: create or collect videos of teaching and learning in your contexts that would be good to use in training on how to use the Toolkit and help teachers further develop their skills within the contexts in which they teach.
10. Think about Bias and Stereotypes: discuss the types of bias and stereotypes that teachers, students and communities tend to use within your contexts so you can use examples of how certain people/groups are treated unfairly. Examples could include e.g. a teacher not communicating well with certain migrant students; using a negative term instead of names for children from a low social class; ignoring food from a student from a particular background; treating girls and boys differently.
11. Think about Diversity: Explore what diversity means in your contexts and wider country and what respect for diversity would mean.
12. Translate the tool where necessary: Translate the tool if needed, taking care that you are translating the concepts accurately – translating back into English may assist the process. Take care that the language is easy to understand and not too formal.
13. Pilot the revised tool: where changes have been made, pilot the use of the tool in a sample of primary and secondary schools before finalising (please see below for key questions to consider in piloting).

## How can we pilot the Schools2030 VITAL Toolkit?

The purpose of piloting the Schools2030 Toolkit is to see how far it meets our needs for assessing the level of support in the environment and teaching and learning practices in our different contexts. Changes may need to be made at the country level, to include more contextually relevant information, language and examples.

### KEY QUESTIONS

1. What are the key questions and information you wish to gather from the piloting? e.g.
  - a. How far does the Toolkit address the national priorities in education as stated in your National Curriculum and other relevant documents?



- b. Who are the best people to conduct the observations? Head teachers, peer teachers, learning development partners, etc.? Please consider the school cultures and hierarchical structures in your contexts. Who are the best persons who can provide and model trusting relations within which teachers can grow professionally without fear?
  - c. Alternatively- what could be done to enable head teachers to develop more of a learning culture within their schools and learn to conduct classroom observations and provide constructive feedback to teachers?
  - d. Have all observers been trained on using the tool to ensure general reliability? Is there a clear understanding of the concepts used and behaviour statements and what these would look like in Schools2030 supported classrooms in your contexts? Please refer to *How Might We Conduct VITAL Training* for a slide deck to help with orientational training.
  - e. How far do the observers have a common understanding and agreement when allocating a level to a behaviour from levels 1-4? To achieve inter-rater reliability, you may wish to have around 80% commonality in the levels that trainee observers allocate to behaviours observed.
  - f. How easy is the tool to use? Which parts were harder and why?
  - g. How long did it take to use and fill in the tool? How long did observations and post-observation and teacher reflection sessions take?
  - h. Was each behaviour observable? If not, why not? If certain behaviours were deemed not applicable, why was that?
  - i. What does the data from the piloting tell you about the use of the Schools2030 VITAL toolkit in your context?
  - j. What are your recommendations for adaptations and clarifications to be made in the Toolkit because of the Pilot? Who could review these for you?
2. What is the sample of schools that you will use to pilot at the primary and secondary school level?
- a. You may e.g., select 6 schools: 3 each at the primary and secondary level cohort.
  - b. Within this you may select a school that is not deemed to be performing well, a school deemed satisfactory and a school that is performing well.
  - c. In 20% of the schools, can you have two observers, or have someone from the Schools2030 or government education official team to also observe alongside a head teacher to see how far the assessments of the learning environment and teaching and learning practices align to attain more reliability of assessments?



### 3. How easy or hard was it to use the Teacher Reflection Tool?

- a. How easy/hard was it for teachers to reflect on their own practice using the *Teacher Self-Reflection Form*?
- b. Were you able to pull out or adapt relevant questions from the *Observer Reflective Dialogue Question Bank* after the observation to help teachers reflect?
- c. How might we help teachers learn to reflect better on their professional practice?
- d. What more assistance, if any, is needed to train observers/peer mentors?

### THE USE OF THE VITAL TOOLKIT: KEY DECISIONS TO MAKE

Before the use of the VITAL Toolkit, the following key decisions need to be made:

