

Cultivating connection



What is VitalVoices?

VitalVoices cultivates students' ability to listen to themselves and others. Through 15-minute experiential lessons, adolescents develop the capacity for self-awareness and improve their ability to dialogue with others. Over time, students adopt aspects of the curriculum, making it an empowering and safe place to exercise their voice. Geared toward 4th to 8th grade students, the curriculum can be used for one to three years.

VitalVoices cultivates:

- **A sense of self** through both personal and relational awareness
- **Connection with school and community** for a stable and supported journey to and through high school, college, and beyond
- **Classroom spaces** where students communicate well with each other, even within conflict or across perceived differences

How do I use VitalVoices?

The curriculum is flexible. Schools and out-of-school providers can use VitalVoices for all students, as an intervention with selected students, in a homeroom or advisory period, in content classes, or in Special Education and English as a Second Language classes. It can also be part of a school-based mentoring program or restorative justice initiative.

How do I know VitalVoices works?

After only nine lessons of VitalVoices, middle-grades students in our pilot reported a statistically significant improvement in their ability to get along with peers who are different from themselves and in their perception that students at their school get along with each other. Survey results also suggested that students felt more socially accepted. See our [evaluation report](#) for more detail.

How will VitalVoices benefit my school?

VitalVoices supports key components of student wellbeing, laying the foundation for academic learning. We expect student improvement across the following dimensions:

- **Connectedness:** school belonging and quality relationships with peers and teachers
- **Emotional wellbeing:** emotional regulation and empathy for others
- **Social skills:** ability to navigate social situations, including conflict
- **Engaged students:** school attendance and engagement, with fewer behavioral incidents



What's in the VitalVoices curriculum?

VitalVoices is based on research as well as interviews with school leaders, teachers, counselors, and — importantly — adolescents themselves. VitalVoices is aligned with CASEL's SEL framework and the developmental needs of early adolescents.

VitalVoices can be used one to two times per week for approximately 32 weeks a year (some lessons can be repeated). In the first year, all students complete a 16-lesson introductory unit. Schools can continue VitalVoices for up to three years. The third year focuses primarily on *Connection with Community* lessons.

VitalVoices Curriculum Overview

CATEGORY	TOPIC	DESCRIPTION
Intro to Program	Overview	Exploring what wellbeing and community mean to students
	Listening Toolkit	Introduction to curious questions, reflection, and pause
	Awareness	Introduction to awareness and mindfulness
Connection with Self	My Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My support structure • My personal and relational assets
	My Core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interests, values, and beliefs • Aspirations and needs
	Deepening Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness in daily life • Noticing feelings, thoughts, and physical sensations
Connection with Others	Relational Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivating kindness • Gladness and compassion for myself and others • Practicing generosity
	Empowerment	Student-led discussions practicing the listening toolkit
	Relational Play	Games and movement
Connection with Community	My Community	Strengths, challenges, and health of my community
	Community Designs	Learning and applying design thinking to teen-identified issues

fig Education Lab

About Fig Education Lab

Our mission is to reimagine education by collaboratively designing, implementing, and researching innovative programs that help all learners lead lives that are personally fulfilling, socially connected, and economically secure. We believe the best and most enduring ideas in education come from combining practitioner wisdom, rigorous research, and community assets.

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VITAL VOICES

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We work with organizations to provide curriculum suited to your needs and budget.

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