

Measuring What Matters: New Approaches to Holistic Outcomes Measurement

Insights From The Better Future Forum in Singapore (May 2026)

We believe in growing students holistically so they can shape a better future, but education systems and classrooms are often measured by narrow indicators of student success.

This session invited Forum participants to hear perspectives from a Global Working Group on Holistic Student Outcomes Measurement on how to better measure students holistically to begin to measure what matters in education.

Together, we explored the learning question:
How can we better measure students' holistic development?

The Big Idea

One cross-cutting insight emerged from this session and from our Global Working Group:
What we measure must support teachers' and students' holistic development.



— Teresia, Student, Star Sheikh Academy, Kenya

“*Something shifted when my teacher began to measure collaboration, communication, and empathy. What changed in me was my definition of success. I learned that I am more than a grade. I am a leader with the capacity to influence my environment. My teacher’s focus on data didn’t just track my progress; it gave me a map to find myself.*”

Any measurement system that seeks to reflect the whole child, support teachers to grow, and support students to find their purpose must integrate academic skills alongside competencies such as awareness, connectedness, agency, and wellbeing.

Rachael Wanjiru, Head of Program, Teach For Kenya opened the session by describing how Teach For Kenya’s program supports their students and teachers to use both academic and non-academic measures of student and teacher success to continuously improve. Rachael was joined by Judith Jematia, Teacher Coach, who offered a reflection on how this leads to observable changes in how teachers and students engage in class. “For too



long, data in a classroom has been synonymous with grades. But if we only look at test scores, we are looking at a silhouette of a child, not the whole person. By viewing data through the lens of the whole child, we finally start to see the full picture.” Teresia, a current student, shared the palpable shift she felt when her teacher began measuring and reflecting on broader sets of outcomes beyond just grades. Rachael then invited reflections from the audience and representatives of three case studies.

Case Studies: How can we better measure students' holistic development?

Three case studies further pushed the discussion on technical advancements that teachers and systems can leverage to better measure holistic outcomes.



Paulina Valenzuela
Assessment Specialist,
Oxford MeasureED

Paulina challenged the distinction between “academic” and “non-academic” outcomes, arguing that emotions, relationships, and social-emotional competencies are inseparable from learning.

She shared examples of performance-based and integrated assessment approaches that embed creativity, resilience, empathy, and self-regulation within academic learning tasks rather than treating them as separate domains.

Paulina shared how Schools 2030 has created [an open source Item Bank](#) for strong performance-based tasks for measurement.

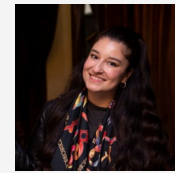


Sreehari Ravindranath
Head of Research,
Dream a Dream

Sreehari reflected on the importance of “invisible pedagogical mindsets”—the relational and emotional conditions teachers create in classrooms that shape whether students experience belonging, agency, confidence—or disengagement.

He argued that educational measurement should move beyond measuring children alone and instead examine the conditions and relationships that enable students to thrive.

“The deepest outcomes of education cannot be found within the child alone, but within the relationships and conditions that shape what a child comes to believe is possible.”



Alexis Ramos
MERL Lead, Teach For Poland

Alexis shared how Teach For Poland triangulates data from student surveys, teacher surveys, and classroom observations.

Teachers use this data as a map of their students' emotional and psychological needs, allowing them to shift their instructional methods dynamically, such as introducing “thinking out loud about mistakes” to reduce the fear of failure and using “reflection journals” to capture student sentiments.

Simultaneously, students are empowered as active participants in their own development; the data-driven interventions foster their agency, build collaboration through group projects, and encourage them to view mistakes as valuable opportunities for growth.

Insights: Other Key Considerations for Holistic Outcomes Measurement

In addition to highlighting examples of **how holistic outcomes measurement can be supportive of teachers' and students' development**, session participants discussed other core considerations for how to measure holistic outcomes. These insights are reflected in the Global Institute's latest report, [Measuring Holistic Student Outcomes - Insights From a Global Inquiry](#).

1. **Holistic outcomes develop non-linearly.** Unlike academic outcomes, which often follow structured learning progressions, non-academic outcomes such as agency, connectedness, and wellbeing evolve unevenly over time and are shaped by relationships, environments, and lived experiences. This means that traditional before-and-after measurement models are insufficient. Measurement systems must instead reflect developmental trajectories, account for variability, and capture the conditions that enable or constrain student growth.
2. **Teachers and education programs can prioritise malleable and transferable outcomes.** Not all non-academic skills are equally responsive to teaching. Skills such as growth mindset, self-efficacy, collaboration, and problem-solving are highly malleable by teachers. These skills are also transferable, making them useful for measurement. Measuring outcomes that are both teachable and broadly transferable allows educators to focus their efforts where they can have the greatest impact.
3. **Measurement must move beyond an overreliance on surveys.** Student self-report surveys remain the dominant tool for measuring holistic outcomes due to their scalability and ease of use. However, they are limited by bias and often fail to capture how students demonstrate competencies in real-world contexts. Dominic Register of Salzburg Global, mentioned that **portfolio approaches** can often be more helpful, where students, parents, and teachers can upload or document examples of how character and behaviours are demonstrated over a school year. Olivier Brechard from Learning Planet Institute shared how **learner profiles** could be stronger alternatives for demonstrating student progress, compared to narrow measures of academic achievement.
4. **Triangulated measurement enables actionable insights for teachers.** The most effective measurement systems integrate multiple sources of data on dimensions such as student outcomes, teaching practices, and educator mindsets to provide a more complete picture of development. This approach helps educators move beyond surface-level interpretation and better understand the drivers of student growth. Alexis discussed how Teach For Poland is experimenting with data systems and AI to make triangulation more seamless, and help reduce the friction for schools, teachers, and students to better understand holistic development.

Looking Ahead

Throughout the session and the Better Future Forum, a discussion surfaced about how education systems, schools, and institutions for higher education should reorient how they think about student-level progress by prioritising new ways of measuring student progression and alternatives to grading. There is potential for how these innovations in classroom-level measurement can influence system-wide approaches to measuring student progress.

These questions and several others surfaced during the session:

-
- How are schools and education systems turning to **alternatives to grading and student progression** that prioritise holistic student development?
 - How can a triangulated approach to measuring holistic outcomes be scaled? How can AI and technological advances support more seamless triangulation?
 - How can we better measure teacher mindsets, beliefs, and leadership capacities?
 - How might we mobilise various types of education systems—from classrooms, to higher education institutions, to governments—to implement and scale these alternative measurement systems to measure what we value?

*Many thanks to all the participants at the **Better Future Forum** who contributed to these insights. Visit the [Better Future Hub](#) to explore more insights and collective learning from Teach For All's [Global Institute for Shaping a Better Future](#).*

If you would like to share additional insights, questions, or examples, or join upcoming conversations on holistic student outcomes measurement, please contact Robbie Dean, Senior Director, Research, at robbie.dean@teachforall.org.

**Global Institute
for Shaping a Better Future**
An initiative of
Teach For All