



The CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Scale (CICS)

The CIRCLE inclusive classroom scale should only be used in conjunction with the accompanying information in the module 'Inclusion in Practice: The CIRCLE Framework (Secondary).'

The CIRCLE inclusive classroom scale should not be used in isolation from this guidance.

The CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Scale (CICS)

An inclusive classroom is dependent on the *physical environment* (objects and spaces), the *social environment* (people and how they interact) and *structures and routines* that are in that environment. All of these impact on the *motivation, organisation and participation* of learners. Because of the multiple dimensions of the classroom environment, it can impact in various ways: either positively supporting learners or negatively interfering with their participation.

The CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Scale (CICS) provides a rating of how different aspects of the environment impact on learners in the following areas:

- The physical environment
- The social environment
- Structures and routines

Each of these areas has been further divided into five constituent parts. The CICS enables you to assign a rating to each of these so that strengths and weaknesses within the environment can be easily identified.

The CICS comprises 3 ratings tables (one each for the physical environment, the social environment, and structures and routines) and a summary page. You will also find a set of reflective questions adjacent to each of the ratings tables which will help you when considering the different aspects of your classroom environment.

The CICS Rating Scale

The CICS uses the same 4-point rating scale for all the items to be rated. The 4-point rating scale functions as follows:

4	Environment strongly supports learners' participation by providing exceptional opportunities, resources, requirements & structures
3	Environment supports learners' participation by providing appropriate opportunities, resources, requirements & structures
2	Environment interferes with learners' participation by providing limited opportunities, resources, requirements & structures
1	Environment strongly interferes with learners' participation by not providing opportunities, resources, requirements & structures

For each of the items in the CICS you should assign one of the above ratings (1, 2, 3, or 4) as an indication of how the environment supports participation. It is important to bear in mind that the CICS is designed to measure a broad range of environmental impact with a wide range of learners (although it could also be used to assess the environment in relation to an individual learner).

Assigning these ratings requires judgements to be made that are complex. To make this process easier criteria statements are provided which refer to the item being rated. These relate directly to the CICS rating scale and will assist you to narrow down which rating to use. Additionally, you can refer to the reflective questions which will further support you when considering what is required in an inclusive classroom.

Completing the CIRCLE CICS

- Work through each of the three ratings pages identifying which of the criterion statements best describes that aspect of the environment.
- Please note that “4” does not represent “good” environmental support but is indicative of “exceptional” environmental support.
- If it is not clear which of two ratings to use, choose the lower of the two possible.
- Use your professional judgement to decide on the rating for each item.
- It is not anticipated that you will spend a great deal of time selecting the appropriate rating.
- Use your ratings from these pages to complete the CICS summary page.

The CICS can be completed individually or with a colleague/colleagues. It can be stored as evidence of your own professional learning; used to share information with colleagues about your classroom; or utilised as a framework to support discussions with student teachers and probationers about setting up an inclusive classroom.

You may also wish to ask a group of learners to rate the classroom environment from their perspective.

The CICS can be repeated as often as required to demonstrate changes or improvements. This together with the CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Planning Page can be used as evidence of reflective practice and your development towards an inclusive classroom.

Interpreting and using the results of the CICS

The results of the CICS will help to identify the areas of strength and areas to develop that will make your classroom more inclusive. It is likely that an average classroom which is operating effectively will receive mainly “3s” with an occasional “2” rating. This environment would not be expected to make significant change, although would need to focus on the “2s” to facilitate improvement.

However, if an environment received “1s” for most items, with only a few “2s” or “3s”, this would indicate that improvements were needed, and an action plan warranted.

It is essential to focus any efforts for improvement on things which are under your control. For example, if you have rated “Adequacy of Space” (an item within the Physical Environment) as “1” due to building constraints, this would be outside your control. You could raise your concerns with management, but then focus on other areas requiring improvement which are under your control.

If you identify areas requiring development from the CICS, you can make a plan using the CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Planning Page. This provides a structure for you to document and evidence how you are developing the principles of an inclusive classroom.

It can be photocopied and completed individually as evidence of reflection and self-evaluation or could be completed as part of a joint reflection with a colleague, or group of colleagues, where ideas for setting up an inclusive environment can be discussed and shared.

The CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Scale (CICS) The Physical Environment

Items and descriptor	Rating	Copy and paste the select the statement that best describes the Physical Environment Criteria Statements	✓
Accessibility of Space Barrier free Ease of access	4	Accessibility exemplary, exceptional placing of furniture, barrier free	
	3	Good accessibility to spaces, barrier free	
	2	Some barriers accessing spaces, some areas inaccessible	
	1	Barriers including clutter, significant challenges accessing spaces	
Adequacy of Space Availability of spaces Tailored to needs Set up of spaces including seating	4	Exemplary availability of different areas and seating for meeting needs	
	3	Variety of areas and seating available when needed, available spaces match requirements	
	2	Constraints of available space, some needs not met by spaces or seating	
	1	Spaces not matching needs, overcrowded, required spaces or seating not available	
Sensory Space Temperature/noise /lighting/odour Adjustability Self-calming	4	Excellent sensory conditions, temperature pleasant lighting and/or noise levels optimised for sensory preferences	
	3	Comfortable sensory conditions e.g. temperature, light and/or noise levels adjustable	
	2	Some challenges with sensory conditions, variable ability to adjust these e.g. unwanted noise	
	1	Hot/stifling or too cold, noisy, poor lighting, distracting odours - sensory conditions not adjustable/adjusted	
Visual supports Signs Labels Visual timetables Posters/displays	4	Excellent use of visual supports meeting individual needs, consistently used and applied	
	3	Effective use of visual supports meeting needs, mostly consistent	
	2	Challenges in the number and variety of visual supports, difficult to read/understand, some needs not met, some inconsistency	
	1	Visual supports are limited/ambiguous/inconsistent, learners cannot understand, needs not met	
Availability of Objects Objects accessible Objects suitable Adaptive devices	4	Availability of objects exemplary, storage in close proximity, objects matched to characteristics/needs/cultures of learners, independently accessible, well maintained	
	3	Ease of access to all needed objects when desired, storage adequate, matched to personal characteristics/needs of learners, well maintained	
	2	Challenges accessing objects, variable storage, some objects not matched to personal characteristics/needs of learners	
	1	Some objects not available, objects not accessible, objects not adequate for personal characteristics/needs of learners, poorly maintained	

Physical Environment Reflective Questions

The following reflective questions may help you when considering how to rate the physical environment

<p>Accessibility of Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are there any hazards in the physical space? <input type="checkbox"/> Can learners move around the classroom/teaching space easily? <input type="checkbox"/> Can learners access other areas of the school with ease? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the space adapted to meet physical needs? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the space organised and uncluttered? 	<p>Visual supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> What visual supports are used in the classroom? <input type="checkbox"/> Is a consistent format for visuals used across the school? <input type="checkbox"/> Are visual cues and supports in place? <input type="checkbox"/> Are signs and displays multilingual and multicultural? <input type="checkbox"/> Is clear and consistent labelling used to identify resources and resource cupboards? <input type="checkbox"/> Is a visual timetable used? <input type="checkbox"/> Are any of the visual supports over-stimulating or distracting?
<p>Adequacy of Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do you think the space suits learners' needs? <input type="checkbox"/> Can you alter your classroom to suit the needs of learners? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the class set up to promote good interaction? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the space facilitate learning opportunities? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the seating plan optimise learning? <input type="checkbox"/> Does the seating plan meet specific needs? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there space to set up an individual workstation or quiet area/safe space if required? 	<p>Availability of Objects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do learners have easy access to the equipment or resources they need? Are the available objects suited to the needs of learners (e.g. consider seat and table height, types of pencils, pens, scissors etc.)? <input type="checkbox"/> Is technology available and fully utilised (e.g. Interactive whiteboard / ICT)? <input type="checkbox"/> Are materials/resources prepared/selected in advance? <input type="checkbox"/> Are objects/resources positioned consistently and appropriately? <input type="checkbox"/> Can learners independently access resources so that they can develop responsibility for these?
<p>Sensory Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have concerns about the sensory environment (e.g. lighting, noise, temperature, odour etc.)? <input type="checkbox"/> Can the sensory environment be altered easily? <input type="checkbox"/> How do you know the sensory environment is suitable for all learners? <input type="checkbox"/> Are agreed sensory supports available and in place? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the environment adapted to meet sensory needs (e.g. consider lighting and noise levels)? 	

The CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Scale (CICS) The Social Environment

Items and descriptor	Rating	Copy and paste the select the statement that best describes the Physical Environment Criteria Statements	✓
Attitudes Empathy Understanding Non-judgemental Respecting others	4	Staff and peers in environment display, reinforce and value exceptional attitudes, and are highly empathic and non-judgemental	
	3	Staff and peers in environment are actively developing and modelling empathy and inclusiveness and are non-judgemental	
	2	Some challenges with negative attitudes and how these are addressed	
	1	Staff or peers are dismissive/judgemental/exclusionary/condescending/bullying	
Support and Facilitation Verbal support Non-verbal support Physical support Appropriate communication	4	Expert support using variety of prompts/encouragement/demonstration, adapted to individual needs, and promotes independence over time	
	3	Appropriate support using prompts/encouragement/demonstration, takes account of different needs, and builds confidence in learners	
	2	Limited support and/or one form of support only/support not personalised to reflect needs/support leads to increased dependence	
	1	Minimal or ineffective support and/or support does not reflect needs	
Relationships Staff and peers Accepting atmosphere Sense of belonging Opportunities for relationship building	4	Exemplary, with diverse opportunities for positive social interaction and relationship building	
	3	Good relationships and opportunities for social interaction, strong class identity	
	2	Some challenges with relationship building and/or conflict	
	1	Some learners are isolated, conflict, and/or opportunities for relationship building are poor	
Information Accessible Clear Variety of formats Parents/carers and learners	4	Proactive provision of information, several formats, shared and easily accessible	
	3	Information provided in a variety of formats	
	2	Challenges with sharing information, information not always clear	
	1	Minimal information and/or mixed messages, complexity or quantity inappropriate	
Empowerment Support for autonomy Learner centred Responding to needs and views	4	Excellent promotion of appropriate self-direction, proactive seeking of learners' views/choices	
	3	Learners actively involved in class ethos/target setting/self-assessment; learners' desires/views sought	
	2	Learners inconsistently asked for views, limited follow-through or trust in utility of learners' views/choices	
	1	Learners views/choices not sought or considered, over protectiveness, learners' preference not considered	

Social Environment Reflective Questions

The following reflective questions may help you when considering how to rate the social environment

<p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is a learner-centred approach used consistently? <input type="checkbox"/> Are individual differences respected and diversity highlighted and celebrated? <input type="checkbox"/> Are learners made to feel that their views are valued? <input type="checkbox"/> Is constructive feedback given? <input type="checkbox"/> Is support offered sensitively and timely? <input type="checkbox"/> Are approaches to teaching well-being embedded (e.g. social skills, emotions, mental wellbeing)? <input type="checkbox"/> Is sensitivity used when asking learners to 'perform' in front of their peers e.g. reading aloud? <input type="checkbox"/> Do adults model enthusiasm for tasks? <input type="checkbox"/> Is restorative practice used to address negative attitudes? 	<p>Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How is information shared with learners and parents/carers? <input type="checkbox"/> Is information (for learners and parents/carers) easily available in a variety of formats? <input type="checkbox"/> Are "communication postcards" or a home-school diary used? <input type="checkbox"/> Are interpreting services used if required to translate information? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there regular collaboration with parents/ carers? <input type="checkbox"/> How do staff know that information has been received and understood by all relevant parties (e.g. parents/carers, learners)?
<p>Support and Facilitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are the staff responsive to the learners needs, do they anticipate needs? <input type="checkbox"/> What kind of support is given to learners (physical, verbal, visual cues)? Is the complexity of general language used considered? <input type="checkbox"/> Is consideration given to the language demands of the curriculum (e.g. provision of supports and scaffolds to support higher order language?) <input type="checkbox"/> Is the pace and quantity of information giving considered? <input type="checkbox"/> Are complex instructions broken into clear steps? <input type="checkbox"/> Are whole class checklists used (e.g. to work through tasks)? Is teaching adapted for different learning styles? <input type="checkbox"/> Is demonstration and/or modelling used? <input type="checkbox"/> Is verbal information supported with non-verbal information (e.g. gesture, pictures or written words)? <input type="checkbox"/> Are templates used to support structure of work? <input type="checkbox"/> Are worksheets clear and organised? <input type="checkbox"/> Is praise and positive reinforcement given regularly? <input type="checkbox"/> Does support lead to increased independence and autonomy over time? <input type="checkbox"/> How are learners supported to meet their cultural and religious needs (e.g. a quiet space to accommodate prayers and fasting)? 	<p>Empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How do staff assist learners in identifying and solving problems and building autonomy? <input type="checkbox"/> How do staff encourage learners to express their needs, take responsibility or be autonomous? <input type="checkbox"/> How is reflection and sense of self nurtured? <input type="checkbox"/> Are learners encouraged to take responsibility for their learning? <input type="checkbox"/> Is learner self-assessment supported? <input type="checkbox"/> Are learners involved in target setting? Do learners see progress through individual learning targets? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the use of first language encouraged? <input type="checkbox"/> Are learners given valued class/school roles and responsibilities? <input type="checkbox"/> How do staff make use of learners' previous education and experiences? <input type="checkbox"/> Do learners see adults responding to their views and ideas?
<p>Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How would you describe the relationship of (a) learners with staff (b) between the learners? <input type="checkbox"/> Are small group activities utilised? <input type="checkbox"/> Are working relationships between learners considered? <input type="checkbox"/> Are peer supports used? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are break and/or lunch clubs available? <input type="checkbox"/> Are groupings for different tasks carefully considered? <input type="checkbox"/> Are activities regularly included to build relationships? <input type="checkbox"/> Do learners feel valued and secure? <input type="checkbox"/> Do staff support one another to address difficult relationships between adults or adults and learners?

The CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Scale (CICS) The Structures and Routines

Items and descriptor	Rating	Copy and paste the select the statement that best describes the Physical Environment Criteria Statements	✓
Activity Demands Too easy/too hard Enjoyment/ satisfaction Just right challenge Matched to ability	4	Activities promote exceptionally appropriate and creative challenge and enjoyment with excellent engagement	
	3	Activities appropriate to allow for “just right challenge”, almost all learners engaged most of the time	
	2	Activity demands are somewhat high/low, some boredom/stress	
	1	Activity demands too high/too low, causing boredom/stress	
Rules and boundaries Clarity Consistency Effect on learners	4	Exceptionally clear expectations/rules/rewards/consequences provided in a variety of formats and consistently applied	
	3	Expectations/rules/rewards/consequences provided in a variety of formats and almost always consistently applied	
	2	Challenges with expectations/rules/rewards/consequences, some learner disengagement or anxiety	
	1	Expectations/rules/rewards/consequences unclear and inconsistent, learners disengaged or anxious	
Appeal of Activities Value Attraction Interest	4	Very positive perception and understanding of the value of activities offered to learners, variety evident, tailored to interests/cultures	
	3	Attraction to the type of task offered, variety, some tasks tailored to learners’ interests/cultures	
	2	Challenge in how activities are structured which limits their appeal, learners’ interests/cultures not reflected	
	1	Activities are not appealing, learners disinterested, little or no understanding of purpose	
Routines Structure Preferences Consistency	4	Structured routines all exemplary, accommodates for individual preferences, high levels of consistency, promote sense of belonging	
	3	Appropriate structured routine, offers consistency, good preparation for change	
	2	Challenges with how routine is structured, variable consistency, some unpredictability	
	1	Little or no routine or structure provided throughout the class/day/week, unpredictability	
Decision-making Participation in decision-making Encouragement for collaborative decision making e.g. class rules	4	Exemplary encouragement for learners to meaningfully participate in decisions	
	3	Encouragement for learners to meaningfully participate in decisions	
	2	Inconsistency of opportunities being afforded to learners to participate in decisions, participation not always meaningful	
	1	Minimal information and/or mixed messages, complexity or quantity inappropriate	

Structures and Routines Reflective Questions

The following reflective questions may help you when considering how to rate the Structures and Routines

<p>Activity demands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How do you make sure the level of the activity matches the ability of the learners? <input type="checkbox"/> Does work provide challenge and enjoyment for all? <input type="checkbox"/> Is work differentiated to ensure achievable goals? <input type="checkbox"/> Is success celebrated or displayed? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a focus on praising process as well as product? <input type="checkbox"/> Are different learning styles addressed during lessons? <input type="checkbox"/> Do learners engage with all activities? 	<p>Decision-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are learners involved in decision-making about class rules, class ethos, activities, and routines? <input type="checkbox"/> How do you support learners to be involved in decision making? <input type="checkbox"/> How do you ensure that everyone's voice is heard in the decision-making process? <input type="checkbox"/> Are class rules set in collaboration with learners? <input type="checkbox"/> Are learners encouraged to share their views about the class layout? <input type="checkbox"/> Are learners encouraged to share their views about activities? <input type="checkbox"/> How do learners know that their views are respected and have been meaningfully considered as part of the decision-making process?
<p>Rules and boundaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How do you agree and set class rules? <input type="checkbox"/> How do you make sure learners are aware of these? <input type="checkbox"/> Is there a consistent approach to encourage positive behaviour? <input type="checkbox"/> Are class rules clear and specific? <input type="checkbox"/> Are class rules displayed and referred to regularly? <input type="checkbox"/> How do you make sure rewards/consequences are applied fairly, taking into consideration individual additional needs? <input type="checkbox"/> How do you make sure rewards and consequences are effective? <input type="checkbox"/> Are behavioural boundaries clear and consistent? <input type="checkbox"/> Are behaviour triggers recognised and minimised? <input type="checkbox"/> Are roles and routines used to promote learner responsibility? 	<p>Appeal of Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How do you provide activities that are well matched to the interests of the learners? <input type="checkbox"/> Are learners' diverse lived experiences, interests and cultures incorporated in lesson planning? <input type="checkbox"/> Are learners' individual interests used in lesson planning? <input type="checkbox"/> Are cultural differences considered in lesson planning (e.g. girls-only swimming groups)? <input type="checkbox"/> Is experiential learning utilised? <input type="checkbox"/> Are multisensory approaches used? <input type="checkbox"/> Is technology used to engage interest? <input type="checkbox"/> Is active learning utilised? <input type="checkbox"/> Are incentives and rewards used that are valued by learners? <input type="checkbox"/> Do learners understand the value and purpose of the activities?
<p>Routines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> How do you help learners with their daily and weekly routine? <input type="checkbox"/> Is structure and routine used throughout the lesson/week e.g. set day for homework? <input type="checkbox"/> How do you support learners to understand routines and to understand changes to routines? <input type="checkbox"/> How do you prepare learners for any change to routine? <input type="checkbox"/> How do you support learners to practice and prepare for new experiences? <input type="checkbox"/> Are lessons planned to follow a consistent format? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the learning intentions made clear at the start? <input type="checkbox"/> Are learning outcomes reviewed and summarised? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there routine opportunities for active learning and multisensory learning? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there opportunities for practice and repetition? <input type="checkbox"/> Are there routine opportunities for movement breaks? <input type="checkbox"/> Are consistent /predictable seating plans in place? 	

Summary of the CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Scale (CICS)



Using the information from the completed summary sheet below will give you a record of how inclusive your classroom environment is at any given time of the school year. This can be used to quickly audit any areas requiring attention and can help you to develop a plan for any improvement required. You can use the Circle Inclusive Scale (CICS) planning page to document your plan for improvement. The CICS provides a score which can be used as a baseline and then repeated to show the effect of any change made to your classroom environment.

Date		Completed by:	
Classroom			
Date for review			
4	Environment strongly supports learner(s) participation by providing exceptional opportunities, resources, requirements and structures		
3	Environment supports learner(s) participation by providing exceptional opportunities, resources, requirements and structures		
2	Environment interferes learner(s) participation by providing exceptional opportunities, resources, requirements and structures		
1	Environment strongly interferes learner(s) participation by providing exceptional opportunities, resources, requirements and structures		

Structures & Routines	Decision Making	4 3 2 1
	Routines	4 3 2 1
	Appeal of Activities	4 3 2 1
	Rules and Boundaries	4 3 2 1
	Activity Demands	4 3 2 1
Social Environment	Empowerment	4 3 2 1
	Provision of Information	4 3 2 1
	Relationships	4 3 2 1
	Support and Facilitation	4 3 2 1
	Attitudes	4 3 2 1
Physical Environment	Availability of Objects	4 3 2 1
	Visual Supports	4 3 2 1
	Sensory Space	4 3 2 1
	Adequacy of Space	4 3 2 1
	Accessibility of Space	4 3 2 1

CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Planning Page

You could make a plan by writing down which areas to target based in information from the CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Scale (CICS)

Date		Completed by:	
Classroom			
Date for review			
<p>From your completed CICS what are the key areas are you have chosen to develop. (Consider those with a score of two or less).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 			
<p>Write down key strategies that could be introduced or used more consistently to help you develop this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 			
How will it be achieved?			
Things to implement/ change/develop		Resources/training needed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	
Who will be involved?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 			
Review			
Outcome		Next Steps	
<p>The CICS score in this area has increased/ decreased/ remained the same (delete as required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	
Date review completed:			



Discussion Point

Reflective Questions

- Considering the features of an Inclusive classroom, how inclusive do you think your practice is?
- What are you already doing to make the learning environment inclusive for all learners?
- Which supports and strategies do you currently use to ensure your practice is learner-centred?
- Which strategies could you add to support learners to engage more effectively?
- Which strategies would you like to add to or develop in your current practice? How might you do this?
- Considering learners who already have individual supports or strategies in place, how could you adapt these to make them suitable for the whole class?
- What steps do you take during the preparation and planning process to ensure that you understand the needs of individual learners in your classes?
- Where do you evidence your planning for individual learners?
- Who do you (could you) use as a critical friend/peer support to reflect on your practice with?
- How does the implementation of the supports and strategies by your critical friend/peer support (or another colleague) differ from your own practice?
- Consider observing a colleague working with a learner or group of learners whose needs you find challenging. Do they have a similar experience? Are there any strategies that they use effectively that you may not have considered before?

Complete an ABCD around how an inclusive classroom strategy could be used to overcome a particular challenge relating to a learner or group of learners.

To access the ABCD refer to the Appendix - page 112 in the PDF download of the original CIRCLE Framework: Secondary in Section 9 of this module