

# Instruction for use

## VAK-Monitor (Validation of Adults Knowledge & Skills)

Prof. Dr. Maurice de Greef i.s.m. MSc. Mieke de Haan MLD

*The instrument (the Vak-Monitor) can be used in different ways. On the one hand, to map out the background knowledge of the participant, as a kind of 'intake moment' in, for example, study career guidance. On the other hand, the instrument can be used to map the impact of a learning path. This instruction explains how and when it can be used and administered.*

### **A. Content of the VAK Monitor**

As mentioned, the instrument can be taken both during the intake and during the learning process. During the intake, all parts are used with the exception of part 5. If you want to measure the impact of a learning pathway, you use parts 1 to 4 at the start and parts 1 to 5 for the second measurement. Of course, one must use the parts whose impact one wants to measure. The instrument can therefore be used per component and sometimes per subcomponent. The five parts are:

- 1) General information
- 2) Basic skills: language, numeracy and digital skills
- 3) Skills for home, school and work
- 4) Learning skills
- 5) The learning environment

#### *Fixed parts*

If you use the VAK-Monitor during the intake, it is useful to use parts 1 to 4.

If one wants to visualize the impact of a learning pathway, one must therefore take part 1 (general data) with the components that are relevant to the learning pathway in the first measurement and part 5 (the learning environment) must also be taken in the second measurement, the end of the learning pathway.

#### *Choice of parts*

If desired, sub-parts of parts 2, 3 and 4 can be used for the various purchases. However, if one wants to measure the impact of the learning pathway, one must take the same sub-components at the start of the learning pathway as at the end of it. So one can choose whether one wants to purchase part 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C or 4 or wants to use a combination of these parts. The choice of components therefore depends on what one wants to measure via the VAK Monitor, and therefore wants to know. These are the substantive components (in addition to part 1 'General data' and part 5 'My learning environment'):

- 1. General Data (including gender, age, origin, education)
- 2. Language, numeracy and digital skills:
  - A. Language skills (including vocabulary)
  - B. Numeracy
  - C. Digital skills
- 3. Skills for home, school and work
  - 3.A General skills for home, school and work
    - A.1 Management of tasks
    - A.2 Problem solving
    - A.3 Cooperation
    - A.4 Critically thinking
  - 3.B Skills focused on own competencies and career

- B.1 Career development
- B.2 Profile development
- B.3 Self-reflection
- 3.C Specific skills for internship and work
  - C.1 Resource Management
  - C.2 Awareness of norms
- 4. Learning skills
- 5. My learning environment (including teacher, learning activities and materials, and transfer)

### **Background knowledge and guidance during the administration**

Fixed intelligence, that which you know and understand about the world around you, is largely learned. Fixed intelligence can be seen as every person's hard drive; It consists of knowledge particles in the form of combinations of images and words. Together, they form a chunk of knowledge on the hard drive of a student or participant. It is that fixed intelligence that we can increase through our education.

Not everyone has a hard drive of the same size and for students or participants who have a hard drive that is too small, this can be a major obstacle to successfully following the course. As a result, they are less able to follow the lessons, carry out assignments and take tests or they have to put in a lot of effort. One of the causes may be that they do not have the words with the images, or that the images also appear to them unknown. This often has to do with a world of experience that is too limited.

We can monitor the fixed intelligence by investigating the extent to which the background knowledge of the student or participant is sufficient to follow the lessons, assignments and conversations during the training.

If we want to educate students and participants about the importance of increasing background knowledge, you could tell them: *"You have gained experiences in your life and formed images of the world around you. And you can also put that into words. We want to support you to get better at that, so that lessons, assignments and tests become easier for you."*

During the administration of the VAK-Monitor, the following matters are important:

- Tell the participants and students that it is an objective judgment and not about who scores the highest. If they score high on everything in the beginning, we cannot measure the change. And the question then is how objectively they have assessed themselves.
- Explain why you are taking the questionnaire: *"It is about determining background knowledge or measuring the progress of background knowledge with the aim of clarifying what you still need or can learn"*.
- Please explain each heading of the different sections of the questionnaire.
- If an item in the section of the questionnaire does not apply, ask the student or participant to fill in the lowest score for it, (i.e. a 1).
- Give the participants and students time to complete the questionnaire during the lesson. If they have any questions when filling it in, they can ask them at any time. You may explain a question, but you may not influence the student's answer.

### **Duration and form of 'learning path' in impact measurement**

Ideally, there should be 12 to 15 weeks between the start and the end of a learning journey to be able to measure the impact. Sometimes an exception is made for an activity that lasts 10 weeks (De Greef, Segers and Verté, 2010). Research shows that the intensity of the learning trajectories is not the biggest influencing factor. The content and

form of the process are more decisive. The following factors can promote the success of a learning path (De Greef, 2022. p. 5):

- Presence of a qualified teacher who helps the participant or student in applying what they have learned in practice, supports the participant or student with problems during learning and compliments the participant or student on successful learning moments.
- Presence of learning materials and activities that promote self-direction, promote interaction between participants and students, are appropriate in terms of level and are appropriate to the learning objective or skills to be developed.
- Presence of transfer possibilities, or opportunities to apply what has been learned in practice.

Research shows that face-to-face learning and therefore the presence of a teacher is of great importance for low-educated people (De Greef & Bohnenn, 2011).

### **Credentials**

De Greef, M. (2022). *Success factors for training programmes for young people aged 16 – 23*. Brussels: Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

De Greef, M. & Bohnenn, E. (2011). *Support and certification of digital learning for low-skilled workers: Frameworks for a digital learning and practice environment*. 's-Hertogenbosch: Artéducat.

De Greef, M., Segers, M. & Verté, D. (2010). Development of the SIT, an instrument to evaluate the transfer effects of adult education programs for social inclusion, *Studies in Educational Evaluation* (36), 42 - 61.

## **B. Instructions for the use of the VAK-Monitor**

### **Phase 1: First test moment: Step-by-step plan**

Below are the steps to complete the VAK Monitor for the first time with a student or a participant.

*Do you want the website to be read aloud? Then install the 'Read Aloud' App. You can do that via this website: <https://readaloud.app/>. First choose your browser and click on one of the 3 indicated browsers. On the next page there is a short video on how you can use the reading function.*

#### *Step 1: Login Codes*

The student or participant must have an e-mail address that can be used. This can be a private e-mail address or an e-mail address that they have received through the study programme. If this is not available for (some of) your participants or students or for the entire group, you can use fictitious e-mail addresses.

#### *Step 2: The VAK Monitor*

Jump to: [www.vak-monitor.nl](http://www.vak-monitor.nl).

#### *Step 3: Log in*

- Click on the button at the top right: 'Register'.
- Have the student/participant enter his or her email address.
- Have the student/participant come up with a password and enter it twice. It is important that they remember them and therefore write them down somewhere!
- Then choose 'Register'.
- Does the student or participant not have an email address? Then enter the e-mail address and the corresponding password of the participant or student, which you received from Maurice de Greef.

#### *Step 4: Fill in the questionnaire*

- Click on 'Start the questionnaire'.
- Tick the box next to 'Yes, I agree'.
- Click Continue.

As a teacher, choose the substantive components. This way you prepare the questionnaire and the participant or student can fill in the questionnaire themselves. Don't let the student choose for himself! Sub-parts of parts 2, 3 and 4 can be chosen for the different purchases. However, in order to measure the impact, the same sub-components must be purchased at the start of a learning process as at the end of it. The teacher can therefore choose whether he or she wants to take part 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C or 4 or a combination of these parts. The choice of the parts therefore depends on what one wants to measure via the VAK Monitor, and therefore wants to know. If an item in the section of the questionnaire does not apply, ask the student or participant to fill in the lowest score for it, (i.e. a 1). Section 1 'General data' is automatically filled in only the first time.

- These are the substantive components (in addition to part 1 'General data' and part 5 'My learning environment'):
  - 2. Language, numeracy and digital skills:
    - A. Language skills (including vocabulary)  
*Can you use language at school, internship or work?*
    - B. Numeracy



## Phase 2: Second collection moment: Step-by-step plan

Below are the steps to complete the VAK Monitor for the first time together with a student or participant. You only go through this phase if you want to measure the impact, but you don't do that if you use the VAK Monitor as a kind of intake or guidance tool.

### Step 1: The VAK Monitor

Jump to: [www.vak-monitor.nl](http://www.vak-monitor.nl).

### Step 2: Log in

- Click on the button at the top right: 'Log in'.
- Have the student/participant enter his or her email address. The same as the first time.
- Have the student / participant enter the password that he or she also entered during the first measurement.
- If the password is forgotten, create a new one. This can be done via the link that you have sent to the e-mail address entered. To do this, choose 'forgot password' and enter the email address used.
- Then choose 'Log in'.

### Step 3: Fill in the questionnaire

- Click on 'Start the questionnaire'.
- Tick the box next to 'Yes, I agree'.
- Click Continue.
- Choose the substantive parts. To measure the impact, however, the same (sub)components must be purchased at the start of the learning process as at the end of it. Part 1 'General data' is automatically filled in only the first time and part 5 'My learning environment' is automatically filled in only the second time.
- Click Continue.
- Fill in the questionnaire.
- After the last question of section 5, click on 'View result' to view the results.
- **Discuss these scores well with your participant or student. It is a snapshot and self-reflection. So it can mean that one sometimes overestimates or underestimates oneself. In order to be able to interpret the results properly, a conversation is really necessary!**

### Step 5: Log out

- Click on the 'arrow down' next to your name and then on 'Log out'.