

# Next Generation Learning

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The congress for  
professionals  
from education  
and childcare



het  
nationaal  
**onderwijs**  
congres  
**Caribbean**

# Introduction



## Preparing children for their future

We say it often: “We want to prepare children for their future.” But if we’re honest, aren’t we sometimes inclined to educate them for our past? For a world that no longer exists?

This year, The National Education Congress Caribbean breaks that pattern. With the theme Next Generation Learning, we truly look toward the world of tomorrow. What do children need in a society where technology plays a leading role, where adaptability is essential, and where collaborating across cultures and borders is part of everyday life?

The answer doesn’t lie in one single method or gadget, but in a combination of vision, trust and courage. Courage to let go of what no longer works. Courage to invest in new ideas. Courage to take risks, and that is exactly what de Rolf groep is doing.

Stay inspired, keep growing and continue to be part of this educational revolution. Welcome to the National Education Congress Caribbean, Next Generation Learning!

On behalf of our educational consultants and the congress organization.

# Education for the next generation

## Build a culture of talent development

By **Luk Dewulf**

Imagine: an educational approach that focuses on talent, not on deficiencies. Where we don't judge children based on their difficulties, but rather guide them in what comes effortlessly to them. What would happen if we also looked at teachers, counselors, and school teams from the same perspective?

Luk Dewulf shares an innovative perspective on talent development that is now being put into practice in dozens of schools in the Netherlands, Flanders, Kenya, Berlin, and also on Curaçao and Bonaire. Together with Els Pronk, he developed a method that helps both children and adults express their unique talents.

### **Talent: what you do effortlessly, with a sparkle in your eyes**

In this approach, talent isn't synonymous with excellence. It's not about excelling, but about activities that seem to come naturally. Things that energize you, that you enjoy, that put you in a flow. Talent is what you do with a twinkle in your eye. And it touches on something deeper: the feeling of being yourself.

For children, this means looking beyond numbers or behavior. We ask questions like: "What makes you happy?" or "What do you do without anyone asking?" This is how you discover hidden strengths. What once seemed like disruptive behavior—for example, being busy or asking too many questions—suddenly reveals itself as an expression of creativity, curiosity, or perseverance.

### **The teacher also has talent**

But this approach isn't just about children. Just as important is that education professionals (re)discover their own talents. Because if you know what energizes you, you'll have a stronger presence in the classroom. You'll radiate calm, feel more job satisfaction, and be more engaged. Talent development isn't a trick; it's an attitude, a culture. One that can permeate an entire school.

Luk Dewulf



Together with Peter Beschuyt, Dewulf and Pronk developed a framework of 39 talents, divided into five categories. This allows you to map the unique profile of every child and adult. Not to label, but to give language to what often remains invisible.

### **One sentence that sticks**

What stands out in practice: this approach works. A single, heartfelt phrase—like "You bring calm to the group" or "You ask questions that make a difference"—can resonate with you for life. Teachers notice that their connections with students deepen, that motivation grows, and that collaboration flows more smoothly.

Today, this approach has grown into an international movement that looks ahead with hope. In times of performance pressure and complexity, it offers a clear compass: see what's happening. Identify what's right. And together, build a generation that stands strong and authentically in life.

### **About Luk Dewulf**

Luk Dewulf is an educator and expert in talent development. He specializes in positive psychology and appreciative work, and has written several books on talent and burnout. Together with Els Pronk, he developed a practical method that is now used in hundreds of schools. Luk is a sought-after speaker both nationally and internationally.



Win a book by **Luk DeWulf**

Leave your details for a chance to win!

# Next Generation Learning under the Caribbean sun

How de Rolf groep uses courage, love and a passion for learning to advance education in the Caribbean islands

There's one thing you know for sure if you work in education: standing still isn't an option. While the world around us is changing at a breakneck pace—think AI, climate change, TikTok trends, and kids who are more adept with an iPad than you are with your coffee machine—education never stands still either. Thank goodness. Because what worked yesterday is already outdated today. And our children? They deserve an education that moves with the times, thinks ahead, and inspires.

There, right at that intersection between innovation and connection, you'll find de Rolf groep. And yes, even on the Dutch Caribbean!

## **Education in motion – literally and figuratively**

Anyone who ever thought education was just about books, classes, and methods missed the memo. Education is about people. It's about building self-confidence, critical thinking, and social skills. It's about helping children find their place in the world—a world that is anything but predictable.

De Rolf groep understands this better than anyone. They've been active on the islands for years. Not with a standardized approach, but with a customized approach, commitment, and a relentless drive to make a real difference. Why? Because every child matters. And because good education doesn't stop at the European borders of the Netherlands.

## **From idea to impact: The National Education Congress Caribbean**

Eight years ago, it all began with an idea. A vision. A desire to bring together education professionals on the islands, inspire them, and send them home with new insights. That's how the National Caribbean Education Congress was born. Not a cumbersome event where you drift off to sleep during yet another keynote, but a vibrant gathering full of energy, content, and, crucially, a space to truly connect.

The congress has since become a household name. With over 2,250 participants spread across three islands: Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire. And this is just the beginning. The plans are clear: we'll grow to six islands. Sint Eustatius, Saba, and Sint Maarten can start getting ready. Because the education party is coming!

## **Quality above all**

De Rolf groep has a reputation to uphold when it comes to quality. Whether you're looking at developmental materials, training, or advice: the bar is set high. And rightly so, because children deserve nothing less.

At the same time, they realize that you shouldn't copy "Dutch" solutions to the Caribbean. What works in Zwolle doesn't necessarily work in San Nicolas, Tera Kora, or Rincon. The context is different. The culture is different. The challenges are different. That's why de Rolf groep always works side by side with local schools, boards, and partners.

You can feel it. In the approach. In the tone. In the passion.

### **People with a mission (and a warm smile)**

What makes de Rolf groep so special isn't just what they do—it's how they do it. You won't meet distant advisors in ties, but people who welcome you with a warm smile. People who have their feet firmly planted in the mud (or the Caribbean sand). They understand what it's like to be in front of a class, to work with limited resources, to constantly strive for a balance between teaching, planning, and personal development.

Passion, enthusiasm, and knowledge form the core of the team. They believe in the power of the collective, but they all also have a personal passion. A passion that infects others. You'll notice it at the conference. You'll feel it during a training session. And it's infectious.

### **The future is now – and we are ready for it**

We can keep dreaming about what education could look like. But why wait? The world is changing faster than ever. The time for thinking is over – this is the time for action.

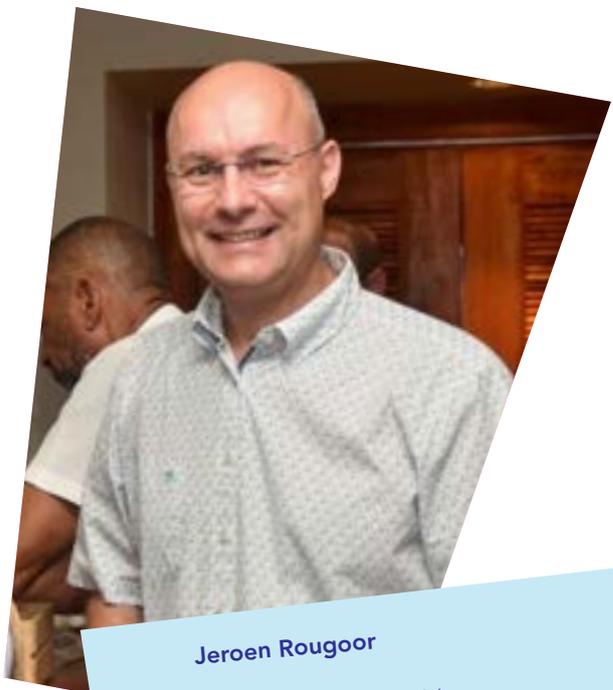
And yes, it's exciting. Change can be a little painful. But it's also beautiful, powerful, and refreshing. Especially when you know you don't have to do it alone. De Rolf groep is there for you. With experience, enthusiasm, and a healthy dose of courage.

So let's keep building together. Building classrooms where every child feels valued. Building teams that continue to grow. Building schools where learning is fun, valuable, and meaningful.

### **Finally, teaching in flip-flops is allowed – as long as you are making progress!**

Whether you work at an elementary school on Statia, a childcare center on St. Maarten, or a secondary school on Saba, you are part of a larger movement. A movement toward future-oriented, inspiring, and inclusive education.

De Rolf groep is here. Not as a passing visitor, but as a lasting partner. Not with a finger in the air, but with a hands-on approach. With knowledge, courage, love—and a healthy dose of humor. Because yes, learning can also be fun!



**Jeroen Rougoor**

Export Manager Caribbean,  
island enthusiast and convinced that  
learning only truly works when it connects.

# Reading motivation in primary education

by Marjan Klein, educational advisor

## “What do you like?”

It seems like a simple question, but for many students, it's an unknown one. They don't yet know what they enjoy reading. And that's precisely the crux of the matter when it comes to reading motivation in primary education. Because motivation is the driving force behind reading skills. When children read something that interests them, they start reading—and they keep reading.

## Why reading motivation matters

Reading is essential for success at school, and later in society. But without motivation, many children simply don't learn to read. Children who struggle with reading, in particular, need positive reading experiences. These start with motivation: if a child enjoys reading, they are much more likely to read more often—and thus improve their reading skills.

Research shows that reading motivation consists of three components:

**Read Self-Concept:** How well do you think a child can read?

**Read Task Evaluation:** Does a child find reading enjoyable and important?

**Reading Attitude:** What is the general attitude toward reading?

When children score low on these aspects, their reading enjoyment quickly declines. This is reflected in their behavior: reading becomes a chore instead of something enjoyable. And this while regular reading experiences are crucial for developing a broad vocabulary, better spelling, and a stronger sense of language.

## Aidan Chambers: Reading is social

British educator Aidan Chambers doesn't see reading as a solitary activity, but as a social activity. His famous quote is: “A child who doesn't read hasn't found the right book yet.” You only find the right books when you talk about reading together.

His approach revolves around four pillars:

**Access to books:** a wide and varied selection tailored to interests and levels.

**Time to read:** structured reading sessions, every day.

**Space to read:** an inviting and quiet place in the classroom.

**Reading together:** sharing experiences with teachers, parents, and classmates.

According to Chambers, a reading culture is something you actively cultivate. His Reading Circle shows children how to choose their own books, gives them daily reading time, and encourages conversations about what they've read. All of this ensures that reading becomes a habit—and, above all, something children enjoy.



## What can you do as a teacher?

### A few practical tips:

#### 1. Really get to know your students.

Ask what they love: what hobbies do they have? What do they watch on TV? This information will help you suggest books that resonate with their world.

#### 2. Create an inspiring reading environment.

Set up an attractive book corner with books in various genres and themes. Make sure the collection changes regularly so there's always something new to discover.

#### 3. Discuss books together.

Introduce book discussions in the classroom. Have students share what they've read and what they thought of it. This way, they also learn from each other.

#### 4. Daily ritual.

Plan a short, fixed reading time each day (for example, 10-15 minutes) where everyone reads. This makes reading a habit.

#### 5. Set a good example.

Show them that reading is fun. Read aloud yourself, talk about books that resonate with you, and let your enthusiasm be a catalyst.

#### 6. Give children a voice.

Let students participate in deciding on new books for the class. This increases their engagement and makes the reading corner truly their space.



**Did you know?** Reading in a quiet place increases reading pleasure by up to 40%.

# Why e-learning works: flexible learning with lasting effects

Everyone learns in their own way. Some people enjoy diving into a book, while others learn by doing. And we're increasingly using digital tools to brush up on our knowledge. E-learning cleverly capitalizes on this: it's flexible, personalized, and effective. But why is it such a good way to learn?

## **Learn at your own time**

Perhaps the biggest advantage of e-learning is that you learn whenever and wherever it suits you. Whether you have fifteen minutes at school or want to finish a module at home in the evening, you don't have to adapt your learning process to a fixed schedule. This makes it ideal for people in education or childcare, where days are often already quite full.

This flexibility aligns with insights from psychology: people learn more effectively when they can make their own choices about how and when they learn. This increases the sense of ownership, and therefore the motivation to continue.

## **From knowledge to practice**

E-learning courses are often structured around short, clear modules. No thick piles of theory, but learning material you can apply immediately. This is not only enjoyable but also effective. Research shows that people learn better when they actively process the material—by completing assignments, answering questions, or practicing real-world situations.

Direct feedback is also crucial: many e-learning courses immediately indicate what went well and what could be improved. This prevents mistakes from becoming ingrained and creates a steep learning curve.

## **Cleverly constructed for better understanding**

Effective e-learning takes into account how our brains work. Information is often presented in small chunks, supported by images and audio. This combination of text, images, and interaction ensures better retention. This aligns with the multimedia learning theory, which states that people learn more effectively when multiple senses are engaged.

Plus, it helps to learn at your own pace. If you don't understand something right away, you can rewind, repeat, or watch additional explanations—without pressure or time limits.

## **Always up-to-date, for everyone equally**

In a world where knowledge changes rapidly, you want your learning materials to be up-to-date. E-learning can easily be updated with the latest insights, without having to wait for another training day. And everyone who attends the training receives the same clear explanation—very helpful when you're working with a team on a collaborative approach.



### **More than just a tool**

An e-learning isn't a goal in itself, but a powerful tool for stimulating development. It gives education professionals the freedom to take control of their own growth. The combination of flexibility, interaction, direct feedback, and a well-thought-out structure makes e-learning seamlessly aligned with today's needs.

E-learning is practical, effective, and motivating. It helps you acquire new knowledge step by step and apply it in practice. Whether you're working on your own development or want to strengthen your entire team, e-learning gives learning a powerful boost.

### **Citizenship: Building an active society together!**

With this e-learning course, you can add more depth to your education and help children develop into citizens who know how to actively participate in our society.

### **AI in education: innovation and awareness**

With practical examples, interactive assignments and current insights, you will learn how to use AI to make education future-proof and more efficient.

### **STEAM in the classroom: Innovative learning for the future**

With practical modules and inspiring examples, you will learn to design STEAM lessons yourself, encourage an inquiry-oriented approach in students, and create a STEAM-rich learning environment.

### **Scan and discover all e-learning courses\***



### **Tips for learning together**

1. Take a short module with a colleague during coffee break.
2. Discuss one new discovery together and see how you can apply it in your work.
3. Schedule fifteen minutes to explore a new topic that piques your curiosity.



**Please note: all our e-learning courses are currently only available in Dutch. If you are interested in an e-learning course, please contact Jeroen Rougoor.**

# Creativity: craft or creation?

by Nicole Verdonk,  
educational advisor

## Is it art or a assignment?

Preschools and childcare centers are teeming with crafts. An autumn tree here, an Easter bunny there, all beautiful to look at, but often identical. The child follows steps, uses prescribed materials, and creates what they're supposed to. Fun? Yes. Creative? Not necessarily.

If you truly want children to thrive, it's time to put creativity back at the center of the classroom. Not the end product, but the process. Not the following, but the discovery. This white paper explains why this is so important and how to approach it.

## Creativity: playing with ideas

Young children discover the world through their senses. They feel, smell, build, tear, and paint. And that's exactly what makes their brains happy. The first years of life are crucial for brain development. Playing and experimenting create new connections in the brain. That's the power of creativity.

Research from Harvard (2023), among others, shows that creative activities strengthen the development of so-called executive functions: skills like planning, problem-solving, and impulse control.

These skills are not only useful in the classroom, but form a solid foundation for the rest of life.

## The difference between craft and creative activities

A "craft" is a pre-planned end product: every child makes the same thing. Think of a Christmas tree made from folded paper or a crafted chicken for Easter.

Creative activities are all about discovery. Children are allowed to choose, experiment, make mistakes—and create something unique from them.

We've listed the most important differences:

**Process-oriented vs. product-oriented:** Creativity is about the learning process, while a project is about the result.

**Freedom vs. instruction:** Children make their own choices regarding materials, form, and approach.

**Uniqueness vs. uniformity:** Each child creates something unique, rather than all the same.

**Mistakes as opportunities:** In creativity, "mistakes" are part of the learning process, not something to be corrected.



**Tip:** Let the children start without an example and come up with the final product themselves.



Win a Caribbean  
puzzle

### **But shouldn't children learn techniques?**

Absolutely! But you do that by creating space for practice, discovery, and experimentation—not by focusing on the perfect end result. Think of learning to cut, tear, or mix colors. These techniques remain part of the curriculum, but without limiting the child's expression or imagination.

The official curriculum objectives from tracking systems focus on skills like "tears strips" or "makes fine wrist movements." Not on "can glue a chicken." So let's take that as a starting point when designing creative assignments.

### **The role of the professional**

As a childcare professional or teacher, you are the key to a rich, creative learning environment. Your approach makes all the difference. Some principles:

**Facilitate instead of directing:** ask questions instead of giving instructions.

**Offer a wide variety of materials:** consider natural materials, reusable items, paint, clay, etc.

**Avoid judgment:** ask questions like "How did you come up with this idea?" instead of just "How beautiful!"

**Think developmentally:** which learning objective is central (e.g., fine motor skills), and which creative process fits with it?

**Allow room for mistakes:** making mistakes is learning, daring, and growing.



**Did you know?** Free creation strengthens problem-solving skills.



# Creativity in the classroom – Practical tips

## Explore freely

### **Provide three materials and let children create something themselves.**

By limiting the choice to three materials, you lower the threshold and encourage creativity within a framework. Children discover how to combine materials and what all is possible. Tip: choose varied materials, such as paper, buttons, and string, and see how different the results are.

### **Set up a “mistake board” and celebrate the most creative mistake.**

Children learn that making mistakes is part of life. A “mistake board” shows that even failed or unexpected ideas are valuable. This promotes a positive mindset and gives children room to be proud of their experiments. Let children explain why their “mistake” was actually a great discovery.

## Stimulate the senses

### **Play music and have children draw what they feel.**

Music stirs emotions. By having children draw or paint based on what they hear and feel, you strengthen their ability to transform abstract feelings into creative expression. Alternate between calm music and energetic rhythms and discuss the differences in their work.

## Use natural materials from outside

Leaves, branches, stones, or sand add an extra dimension to crafts. Natural materials provide variety in texture, shape, and color. Moreover, children learn about nature through play. Tip: create a seasonal corner where children can gather and use materials themselves.

## Asking questions

### **Ask: “How did you come up with this idea?”**

This question invites children to share their thinking process and consciously reflect on their choices. Instead of just appreciating the final product, you focus on their creativity and their own story. This strengthens their self-confidence and stimulates thinking skills.

### **Have children describe each other’s work instead of judging it.**

When children describe each other’s work, they learn to observe and appreciate it more effectively without comparing or judging. This fosters a safe environment and respect for each other’s unique ideas. You can easily organize this by working in pairs.



## The role of the professional

### Facilitate instead of directing.

Don't give ready-made assignments, but offer space and ask questions that stimulate thinking. For example: "What would happen if you used this material differently?"

### Offer a wide range of materials.

Provide diversity: reusable items, natural materials, paint, clay, fabrics, cardboard. The wider the range, the more likely children are to try out new combinations.

### Avoid judgment.

Instead of saying, "How beautiful!", you can ask questions like, "What do you see as the most special thing about your work?" This way, you focus on their own creativity.

### Allow for mistakes.

Remind children that mistakes are part of learning and growing. Identify a creative "mistake" yourself and demonstrate how it actually sparks new ideas.

**Tip:** Print this page, cut out the tips, and use them as inspiration cards in the classroom or daycare. Let children draw their own cards to give the activity a playful start.



Win a writing package

# Growing and inspiring together: The National Education Congress Caribbean in motion

**The education congress plays a crucial role as a source of inspiration and a meeting place for professionals. It's not only a time to share knowledge, but also an opportunity to strengthen each other and grow together.**

## **Eight years of development, impact, and ambition with SKOA as a partner**

What began as a collaboration between SKOA and de Rolf groep has grown into a leading conference for education professionals in the Caribbean. SKOA, a trendsetter, took the first step with a clear vision for professionalization and educational development in Aruba. Thanks to the intensive collaboration with de Rolf groep, the conference subsequently gained momentum and was expanded to Curaçao and Bonaire, among other places. "We're now on a path of no return," says Anuesca Baly with determination.

## **A congress with a mission: how it all began**

The first congress took place on September 18, 2018, at the Renaissance Hotel in Aruba. Mrs. Josette Daal, then-general manager

of SKOA, was one of the founders of the event, along with de Rolf groep. Mrs. Anuesca Baly, who had just taken over from Mrs. Daal, joined the team immediately. "It felt like something Aruba truly needed—a place for inspiration, connection, and development."

A second edition followed in 2019, which quickly proved too large for the original location. Parking problems and growing interest led to a move to the Hilton Hotel in 2022. "A conference should feel like an investment in yourself. A break from school, in a professional setting. That's pure appreciation."

## **Innovation in challenging times**

When COVID-19 disrupted the conference in 2020 and 2021, it was converted to a digital edition. "De Rolf groep traveled to Aruba, and SKOA then set up local satellite locations, offering remote workshops. It was a bit of improvisation, but it worked," said Ms. Baly.



*"We want to be and remain trendsetters, not to be ahead of the curve, but to inspire others to do the same. Let them copy us. Then we'll have done well." - Anuesca Baly, Managing Director of SKOA*

### **Collaboration and growth**

The collaboration with de Rolf groep was formalized in 2021 with a five-year contract. Since then, the conference has been a joint effort. De Rolf groep organizes a large portion of the workshops, and local experts from organizations such as the IPA, JGZ, and other educational institutions in Aruba provide the remaining workshops.

Another highlight was the training of Digital Literacy Experts, which also began in 2018. "Ten colleagues obtained their postgraduate diplomas. Through de Rolf groep efforts, we established contact with Google, and in January 2020, we participated in de Rolf groep London Bett trip," says Ms. Baly. This step paved the way for a broader digital transformation.

### **Erasmus+, educational weeks and the future**

In 2023, SKOA received Erasmus+ accreditation. This allows SKOA instructors from Aruba to travel abroad for further development. New in 2025 is that SKOA will host its own workshops during an "Educational Week" the week before the SKOA conference. "We've learned a lot, but now it's time to pass it on, practice it, apply it, and truly make it our own."

The congress content will also change. "The core remains math and language; that's where it all begins, but the emphasis will shift more to practical skills. Teachers must be given the opportunity to practice, reflect, and grow in their work."

### **Why SKOA organizes the conference**

SKOA takes its responsibility for professional development seriously. "We consciously invested ourselves, even when government support was lacking. Because as an employer, you have to invest in your people." This vision is widely supported within the organization and is evident in the regular training programs for IB'ers, math specialists, quality coordinators, and school leaders.

According to Ms. Baly, it's not a luxury, but a necessity: "You wouldn't expect a surgeon to go twenty years without learning anything, would you? Why would we consider that normal in education?"

### **Appreciation as a key to development**

The congress is more than just a study day: it's a gesture of appreciation, an investment in people, and a powerful catalyst for educational development.

"We want colleagues to feel seen. They want to see: my employer is doing something for me. And that's motivating."

The future of the congress? Ms. Baly sees it as an invitation to emulate others. "We want to be and remain trendsetters, not to be ahead of the curve, but to inspire others to do the same. Let them copy us. Then we'll have done well."

### **SKOA as a driving force for professionalization**

In recent years, SKOA, in collaboration with de Rolf groep, has developed into a powerful player in the field of professional development in education. The organization offers structured programs for IB'ers, math coordinators, team leaders, and Digital Literacy Experts, among others. In addition, they focus on coaching, knowledge sharing, and creating a professional culture in which development is a given. Not only for the student, but also for the teacher and even for parents. "Because real growth happens together."

*"The congress is more than a study day; it is a gesture of appreciation, an investment in people and a powerful driver of educational development." - Anuesca Baly, General Director of SKOA*

# Preschool Specialist Training

## Enhance early childhood development with knowledge, insight, and impact

The early years of school form the foundation for lifelong learning. With the postgraduate program in Preschool Specialist, you'll elevate preschool education and learn how to optimally connect play and development. This program is

designed for professionals who want to contribute to a rich play-learning environment where preschoolers truly flourish.

You'll delve into the unique developmental needs of young children, gain insight into the latest scientific findings, and learn how to design targeted play programs. From language and math to motor skills and

social-emotional development: you'll discover how to monitor, guide, and support effectively. With attention to each child, using a well-reasoned approach.

The program consists of five modules, including Play, Developmental Areas, and Well-Reasoned Programming. Theory and practice are fully integrated, so you can immediately apply what you learn – in your classroom and within the team.

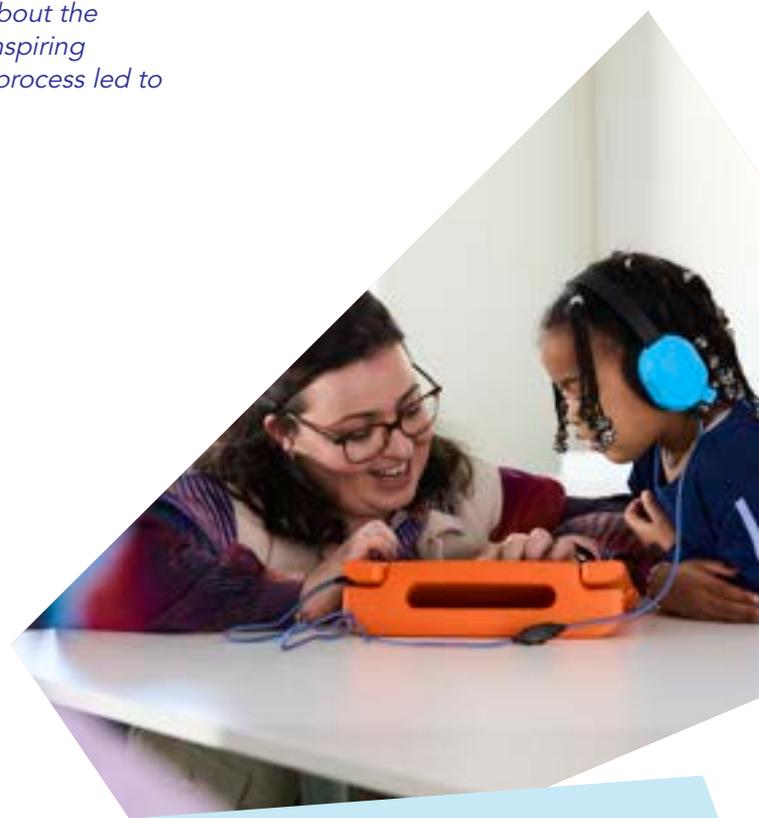
*"Our trainer spoke with incredible passion and expertise about the young child. With thorough preparation, we achieved an inspiring dialogue with a large group of professionals. The positive process led to a wonderful outcome."*

# Digital Literacy Expert Training

## Take the lead in digital development within your school

Digital literacy is no longer a side issue, but an essential component of future-oriented education. In the postgraduate Digital Literacy Expert program, you'll learn how to sustainably and thoughtfully embed digital skills in primary education. It's specifically designed for ICT coordinators, I-coaches, and teachers who want to become driving forces in their schools.

During eight sessions, you'll delve into topics such as teaching methods, change strategies, the creative use of technology, inclusion with ICT, and the connection to current themes like citizenship and big data. You'll work on a practical and future-proof plan, tailored to your school's specific situation. This way, you can get started right away and help build the digital foundation for future generations.



*During the module, I gained good insight into what change can do for you, what it can do for others, and how you can cope with that.*



Win an ICT package

# Calculation Specialist Training

## From preschool to grade 8: strengthen math education across the board

Do you want to elevate math education at your school and create a solid foundation from grades 1 through 8? Then the postgraduate Math Specialist program is exactly what you're looking for. You'll develop into an expert in math education and a coach for colleagues within your team.

What makes this program unique is that early childhood math is an integral part of the program. You'll learn how to support students with a wide range of math skills, including those with severe math difficulties (ERWD). You'll gain practical tools based on proven models such as the three-step model and the action model.

The program consists of four pillars:

- Didactics:** explore effective math strategies;
- Differentiation:** learn to respond to diverse educational needs;
- Learning environment:** develop a rich, challenging learning context;
- Professional role:** provide direction for math policy and coach colleagues.

With nine sessions, practical assignments, and a final presentation on your own development, you'll graduate from this program as a recognized math specialist – ready to make an immediate impact in the classroom and within your school organization.

*"We were introduced to the latest theories, ideas, and models in math education, with plenty of freedom and opportunities to express our needs and what we'd like to learn more about. It was especially inspiring and got us thinking."*

## Inspiring tips

Learning doesn't stop after graduation; it truly begins in the classroom.

Every new skill you learn becomes a gift to your students.

Continuing to learn is the key to energy, enjoyment, and confidence in your work.

Small steps in your development make a big difference for children.

Those who continue to grow as professionals set the best example for their students.

# Internal supervisor training

## Make a difference in student care, educational quality and school development

The role of the internal support worker is rapidly evolving. While this role previously focused primarily on student support, it now has a broader, strategic role within the school. The post-HBO Internal Support worker program will help you become a key player in the network of educational improvement, student support, and team development.

This two-year program is designed for teachers who want to advance their careers or for internal support workers who want to deepen their expertise. You'll learn how to bridge the gap between practice and policy as an IB'er, how to coach colleagues, analyze (test) data, and monitor educational quality. You'll also develop communication skills and delve deeper into topics such as results-oriented working, the inspection framework, intervention, and change processes within the school.

The program consists of 16 sessions spread over two academic years. Theory, literature, practical assignments, and intervention are closely interwoven and seamlessly aligned with the reality of your school environment.

*"The training was incredibly informative. A good balance between theory and practice. The content is truly focused on the objective. For me, the course is very well-structured and easy to follow. In short, it's highly recommended for future internal supervisors!"*

# Turning theory into practice: Learning from Marieke Visser

Strong education starts with strong teaching. Marieke Visser brings her expertise, energy, and practical approach to the classroom through two inspiring workshops designed to support teachers in their daily practice.

Marieke Visser is an education advisor at de Rolf groep, specializing in mathematics education. In addition, she trains teachers in effective instruction and essential teaching skills. What drives her work is a deep passion for education and a strong belief that good teaching makes a real difference for every student. In her sessions, Marieke is known for her clear and accessible style, always bridging the gap between educational theory and what actually works in the classroom. Her focus is on practical strategies that teachers can apply immediately, no matter the context they work in.

In her workshop **“The power of good instruction,”** Marieke explores what effective instruction really looks like in the classroom. This interactive session centers on designing lessons that support all learners, from those who need extra guidance to those ready for more challenge. Participants are introduced to concrete strategies to actively engage students, connect new learning to prior knowledge, and regularly check for understanding. Feedback plays a key role as well: not as an end point, but as a tool to move learning forward. Together, participants reflect on their own instructional choices and strengthen their teaching practice step by step.

Alongside instructional quality, a positive classroom climate is essential for learning to flourish. In the workshop **“A positive classroom without chaos – is it possible?”**, Marieke focuses on group dynamics and classroom culture. Every class is different, but teachers have a powerful influence on how students interact, feel, and learn together. This session offers simple activities and practical strategies that help create a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment. From short group exercises to smart ways of encouraging positive behavior, participants gain concrete tools they can use right away. The message is clear: small changes in daily practice can have a big impact on the atmosphere in the classroom.

With her hands-on approach, Marieke Visser empowers teachers to reflect on their role and make purposeful choices in both instruction and classroom management. Her workshops offer inspiration, clarity, and above all, practical guidance. Participants leave not only with new ideas, but with confidence and concrete strategies to strengthen their teaching and create classrooms where both learning and connection thrive.



# Strengthening learning through structure and collaboration: Learning from Wessel Kok

Effective learning goes beyond subject knowledge alone. Wessel Kok brings a clear and practical perspective on how structure, cognitive skills, and collaboration can significantly enhance student learning in the classroom.

Wessel Kok is an educational advisor at de Rolf groep in the Netherlands, with a specialisation in mathematics education in primary schools and curriculum learning. In his work, Wessel focuses on helping teachers design learning environments where students are actively engaged and supported to develop the skills they need to learn independently and successfully. His approach is practical, well-structured, and grounded in everyday classroom practice, making his sessions highly accessible for teachers.

In the workshop **“Unlocking student potential: executive functions in the classroom,”** Wessel explores the role of executive functions such as attention, planning, self-regulation, and behavioural control. These skills strongly influence how students learn, organise their work, and respond in the classroom. During the session, participants learn how to recognise executive functions in daily classroom situations and understand how challenges in these areas can affect student performance. Wessel translates this insight into practical starting points and simple strategies that teachers can realistically apply to

support and strengthen executive functions, helping students become more focused, organised, and confident learners.

The second workshop, **“Stronger Together: Boosting Engagement Through Cooperative Learning,”** focuses on the power of learning together. Wessel introduces the core principles of cooperative learning and shows how structured collaboration can increase engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. Participants gain insight into why group work is more effective when roles, routines, and expectations are clear. The session offers accessible classroom ideas and practical techniques that help teachers make cooperative learning purposeful, organised, and meaningful, ensuring that every student is actively involved.

Through his workshops, Wessel Kok provides teachers with practical tools to strengthen both individual learning skills and group dynamics in the classroom. His sessions support teachers in creating structured, engaging learning environments where students are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and for one another. Participants leave with clear insights and concrete strategies they can apply immediately to make learning more effective, focused, and collaborative.



# Statia's education future: Driving change through collaboration and innovation

The National Education Congress Caribbean is shaping the future of education on St. Eustatius. Far more than a conference, it is a platform where educators, school boards, and stakeholders come together to share ideas, tackle challenges, and build a stronger educational system for the island.

One of the most pressing priorities is **inclusive education**. Teachers are being equipped with strategies to ensure every child feels supported and valued in the classroom. As Camelia emphasized, *"We want every child to feel seen and included. Inclusive education is not optional—it's essential."*

Another key focus is **student engagement**. Maintaining motivation in a rapidly changing world requires creativity and adaptability. Camelia noted, *"Engagement is the heartbeat of learning. If students aren't connected, they won't thrive."* This commitment to personalized approaches reflects a growing effort to meet individual needs and prepare students for the future.

The congress also highlighted the importance of **continuous professional development**. Moving beyond one-off workshops, the goal is sustained learning that empowers educators to adapt to societal changes, including technology and AI. *"AI is not a threat—it's an opportunity,"* Camelia explained. *"We need to prepare our educators to use technology wisely."*

Beyond strategies and tools, the congress offers something equally valuable: **community and motivation**. By connecting educators across the Caribbean, it fosters collaboration and shared purpose. As Camelia put it, *"Sometimes, all we need is to know we're not alone. The congress gives us that sense of belonging."*

Looking ahead, Statia will continue to play a central role in regional cooperation, with upcoming congresses focused on sharing best practices and strengthening ties between islands. The mission remains clear: better education for every child through collaboration, innovation, and commitment.



# Interview with Rosalyn Johnson, Head of the Department of Community Development & Culture at Public Entity Saba



The National Education Congress Caribbean holds great significance for the advancement of education on Saba. As a small and remote island, Saba does not always have easy access to regional and international developments in education. The congress provides an important platform where educators and policymakers can gain insight into wider Caribbean and global perspectives, allowing them to reflect on and benchmark their own practices. At the same time, it creates space to highlight the unique realities of small island education systems. Through this exchange, the congress stimulates innovation, promotes evidence-based decision-making, and supports continuous improvement in teaching and learning on the island.

Schools and teachers on Saba currently face a range of challenges. Recruitment and retention of qualified staff remain ongoing concerns, alongside limited access to specialised professional training. Within small school environments, teachers are often required to take on multiple roles, which can affect workload and long-term sustainability. In addition, there is a strong focus on strengthening inclusive education, supporting social and emotional learning, ensuring safeguarding and child protection, and continuously adapting curricula and teaching methods to remain relevant and future-oriented in a rapidly changing world.

According to Rosalyn Johnson, the congress plays an important role in both the professional development

and motivation of education professionals on Saba. By sharing new research, practical strategies, and innovative approaches, the congress offers ideas that educators can apply directly in their daily practice. Equally important is the sense of connection it fosters. Engaging with colleagues from outside the island helps reduce professional isolation, affirms that local challenges are shared more widely, and inspires renewed confidence and commitment among educators.

The desired outcome for participants is that they return home with practical tools, fresh perspectives, and renewed enthusiasm for their work. Ideally, they will be able to translate what they have learned into concrete actions within their schools, while also building stronger professional networks. A deeper understanding of the value of regional collaboration can further strengthen local education systems. In the long term, this contributes to improved educational quality and better outcomes for students.

The message to other islands is clear: participation in the National Education Congress Caribbean is an investment in the future of education across the region. Although each island has its own context, many challenges are shared. The congress offers a valuable space for collaboration, learning, and collective problem-solving. By taking part, islands not only strengthen their own education systems but also contribute to a more connected, resilient, and forward-thinking Caribbean education community.





**Thank you and  
see you soon  
in 2027!**

January 19th - Saba  
January 20th - Statia  
January 22th - St. Maarten



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