

Preparing Youth for Validation and Self-Efficacy: Learning to Reflect in Surinamese Primary Education

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The ability to reflect your own behavior and that of others is essential in making personal choices that determine the direction of your life, such as choosing further education after elementary school, vocational training, career steps and personal development in a world that is constantly changing. Learning reflection skills is therefore an important foundation for embracing lifelong learning. Those who master these skills can better recognize, value and utilize personal learning experiences when making important decisions. Validating previously acquired competencies (VPL) is also supported by early learning of reflective skills, as this makes VPL directly applicable within one's learning process. Familiarizing young people with reflection at an early age better prepares them to self-direct their careers and learning. Therefore, although the degree of self-direction varies by individual and situation, the early development of reflective skills contributes to the optimal use of VPL in one's lifelong development.

Education plays a crucial role by contributing to a learning culture that helps prepare youth for the demands of sustainable employability in society and the changing learning and working culture. When pupils learn to reflect on questions such as "Who am I?" and "What do I like to do?" as early as elementary school, this essential condition is met early. Teaching young people to reflect at an early age can lay a solid foundation for later communication as adults. They learn to better understand not only themselves but also others, which later also makes them better equipped to enter into dialogue with "others" about validating their learning experiences, or in other words, being able and willing to consciously engage in a process in which they value and integrate not only their own experiences and achievements, but also those of others in a mutual search for truth and understanding.

The development-oriented project "Raise your voice in the classroom", initiated by the Suriname Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (OWC), aims to strengthen a learning culture in which pupils, with the support of classmates, parents and teachers, learn to respond to the changing needs of social participation. Through this project, the ministry aims to create favorable conditions in which pupils become co-owners of their learning from an early age (MinOWC, 2021). The emphasis is on developing reflection on one's own actions through dialogue with peers. In addition, the project aims to professionalize teachers so that they can effectively equip their pupils with the ability to

recognize and utilize personal qualities and motivation to achieve meaningful careers and positive civic engagement.

Based on the piloting of this project in 2021-20024, we explain what “raising one's voice in the classroom” entails in terms of reflective skills-teaching, its function in the VPL process, and the perspectives it may offer pupils and teachers. We conclude with the impact of the project at micro-, meso- and macro-levels, and the perspectives this learning method offers for the education of the age-group 10-12 years as a future generation well equipped for VPL in the context of their lifelong learning process.

Context

With a total population of nearly 630,000 inhabitants, primary education in Suriname covers 375 schools with approximately 75,000 pupils (Alle Cijfers, n.d.; VVOB, n.d). For several years, an educational reform has been underway with the transition from a curriculum year class system in which pupils are graded according to age, to a developmental education system in which needs, motivation, level, pace and developmental pattern of the pupils are central (MinOWC, 2021a).

Developmental education is not only based on teaching knowledge and understanding, but also aims to form research skills, social, moral and creative skills and attitudes. To achieve this, primary education has been reorganized into three sections: junior (grades 1, 2 and 3), middle (grades 4, 5, 6 and 7), and senior (grades 8, 9 and 10). Pupils progress from year group to year group within these sections and accumulate evidence of the desired learning outcomes of each section in a portfolio (MinOWC, 2021b). After the senior level, pupils advance into an educational profile matching the competency development demonstrated in the pupil's portfolio. The learning method *'Raise your voice in the classroom'* was developed specifically for grades 7 and 8 to strengthen the internalization of developmental education among pupils and teachers in the middle and senior departments, but the term now applies to student learning in all three sections.

Focus

'Raise your voice in the classroom' focuses on preparing and enabling pupils to take responsibility for their own lifelong learning and sustainable employability after leaving school. The emphasis is on learning to reflect on one's own actions and the actions of others in dialogue with each other. In addition, the goal is to professionalize engaged teachers in adequately equipping pupils to identify and utilize their personal qualities to best shape their careers or social participation and meet the needs of modern society with its changing demands for work and learning. See table 1 for an overview of the expected outcomes.

Table 1

Expected outcomes 'Raise your voice in the classroom'

Result	Explanation
Strengthening self-directed learning	Self-directed learning based on personal portfolio management and in dialogue with others (teachers, fellow pupils, colleagues, parents, etc.) can lead to strengthening a positive learning attitude.

Result	Explanation
Focus on person formation and personal development strengths	Pupils benefit from 'Raise your voice in the Classroom' by becoming more aware of their talents and qualities and can be more appropriately advised by their school about the continuation of their learning career.
Better motivated profile and study choices and fewer dropouts	Pupils who have been introduced to 'Raise your voice in the Classroom' during their school years can make better motivated profile choices in junior high and study choices in senior high.
Better connection to further education	'Raise your voice in the classroom' leads, among other things, to more conscious and motivated study choices in subsequent education and is expected to lead to fewer dropouts in the pupil's chosen area of study.
Enjoyability of learning for a career	A not to be disregarded outcome is the emphasis that 'Raise your voice in the Classroom' helps to put on personal motivation and reflection to be able to (co)work on a sustainable career based on one's strengths in the domains of learning and working. This enhances the 'fun in learning' or in other words 'the enjoyability' of learning for the best fit in one's career.
Dialogic teaching	The modern teacher broadens and deepens their own repertoire of actions with the teaching program 'Raise your voice in the classroom'. The exercises to teach pupils to reflect have a positive impact on the pupils' learning outcomes and on their motivation to make the most of their time at school.

Source: Duvekot, et al, 2021.

Building Blocks

The building blocks for 'Raise your voice in the Classroom' come from (a) the Bildung perspective, (b) the focus on 21st -century skills, (c) the qualities approach of Carol Dweck and others, and (d) the concept of career competencies. These building blocks provide action perspectives for teachers to design a learning strategy for "learning to reflect in the classroom. Integrating the learning method for learning to reflect into school programs is aimed at developing and preparing students for meaningful, civic participation and self-directed lifelong development.

Bildung

Bildung (Bildung Academy, 2016) seeks to promote an active, conscious and continuous process, an exploration of where a person stands and moves toward. It is about insight into the levels of interaction between thinking and doing within oneself, between inner processes and actions in the world. For guidance, a set of questions articulates these levels on a personal level:

1. The self-level: questions about 'me'.

2. The global level: questions about 'the world' in which we live.
3. The self-in-the-world level: questions about one's role in 'the world'.

Bildung makes a strong connection in education to the concept of citizenship (Dohmen, 2019). An essential component of Bildung is attention to one's multiple identities. This is called the basic Bildung competence of teachers and pupils, or in other words a basic attitude that is evidenced by recognizing and being able to deal with that plurality, discovering which communities, practices and inner traits a person identifies with and practicing with possible, new identities. This link between Bildung and citizenship occurs in two ways. First, individuals can identify with the country in which they have citizenship rights and hence with the world in which they live. Second, these multiple identities ensure that they do not fit into one box. Everyone has multiple identities, which also means that we have multiple interfaces with other people with whom we share identities. This gives more opportunities for connection among citizens in society and helps increase social cohesion. Moreover, it shows that our identities do not stop at national borders. Therefore, a Bildung perspective always scales up national citizenship education to global citizenship education.

21st Century Skills

21st century skills are generic skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to function in and contribute to society (Thijs, Fisser & Van der Hoeven, 2014):

- Creativity, focused on coming up with new ideas and being able to develop and analyze them.
- Critical thinking, involving being able to formulate one's own reasoned view or opinion.
- Problem-solving skills, revolving around recognizing a problem and being able to come up with a plan to solve the problem.
- Communicating, for conveying and receiving a message effectively and efficiently.
- Collaboration, accomplishing a goal together and being able to complement and support others in doing so.
- Digital literacy, regarding effective, efficient and responsible use of ICT.
- Social and cultural skills, aligned with being able to learn, work and live effectively with people from diverse ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds.
- Self-regulation or self-management of skills, being able to achieve purposeful and appropriate behavior.

Qualities Approach

Carol Dweck's qualities approach (Dweck, 2000) captures the relationship between motivation and performance based on four assumptions:

- The most able pupils are more likely to exhibit go-getter qualities. The truth is that many of these pupils worry the most about failing.
- Success in school nurtures perseverance skills. However, success in itself does little to foster the desire for challenge or the ability to cope with adversity.
- Praise, especially for a pupil's intelligence, encourages go-getters. Dweck's research shows very convincingly that this kind of praise can actually lead pupils to fear failure and avoid risks.

- A pupil's confidence in their own intelligence is key to go-getting skills. However, many of the most confident people, on the contrary, do not want their intelligence tested, and their self-confidence quickly shows cracks when faced with difficulties.

Dweck indicates that go-getter qualities stem from the way a person views intelligence. There are two different ways people deal with the concept of intelligence: fixed or malleable. For some, intelligence is a fixed or immutable trait. They have a certain amount of it and that's it. For others, intelligence is not a fixed trait, but something you can develop through learning. Dweck calls this the growth theory of intelligence, because it presents intelligence as something that can grow through effort, malleable as it were.

Career Competencies

Pupils shape their own career competencies in their education. They do this both guided and independently by making choices with regard to the school they attend, the subjects or domains in which they feel more or less at ease, the forms of learning that suit them best, the profile they aspire to, the study they want to pursue, and the professional practice they have in mind. Within this broad range of application of their career competencies, we distinguish different types of orientation (Meijers & Kuijpers, 2006).

Career competencies are used as a line of development for making personal career choices within education. By linking activities to this development line, the school offers pupils the opportunity to test their competencies in practice and grow in them.

Generally, there are already activities in the school that consciously or unconsciously help work on these competencies. For example, schools focus on citizenship or practical skills such as writing a job application letter, organizing walk-in days at high schools, developing social skills, inviting former pupils as role models and using social media to learn targeted networking.

Reflection and Reflexion

Changes in modern society due to the accessibility of knowledge and technological progress are so rapid and require so much flexibility that individuals need to be able to adapt to these changes faster than the institutions, i.e. the learning system and the social system because those systems have little flexibility. Giddens and Beck called this - albeit with different nuances - structural reflexivity in which the individual operates as the main change agent or adaptor (*the self as primary agent*) within the learning society. The individual operates not only more reflectively but also reflexively (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992).

Reflective individuals learn from situations by reflecting on their actions and apply what they have learned to similar circumstances. *Reflexive individuals* go further by not only analyzing the situation, but also including themselves in the reflection, providing insight into how and why one acts. Reflection includes both reflection on the situation and on one's own changing personality.

For individuals, this means that they have an important and growing responsibility to monitor and help realize change(s). From this perspective, lifelong learning is an important feature of modernity in which meaning and purpose in society are rooted in '*the self*,' or the human being, as the primary 'change manager' in 'the learning society.'

However, this human being can never be completely self-directed. There will always be some situation or type of situation in which the individual does not develop or learn. So, there will always have to be some dialogue in which the individual collaborates and learns with others. It will also to a greater or lesser extent be able to be facilitated, guided or even directed by other stakeholders in the given context. VPL can support and encourage this positioning of '*the self*' as co-owner, and also as co-designer of the lifelong learning process. Mastering the reflective skill is prerequisite for VPL in the sense that VPL is most optimally utilized when the learning individual's own voice is well heard from the start of the VPL process.

This process of (self)reflection within personal learning processes is what Sen (1999) calls an instrumental freedom. Learning can contribute, directly or indirectly, to the freedom people experience to be able to live as they would like to live. It is therefore important that people have access to all forms and stages of learning to give form and substance to their 'destiny'. For individuals and their access to learning opportunities, a variety of organizations, institutions and arrangements are at hand, all of which position themselves as 'partners in learning' in 'the learning society'. This process is also regarded as a democratization of learning - in the sense of access, freedom of choice without procedural and financial constraints - and is thus an important condition for the concept of 'the learning society' to become a reality, even if the different actors (individuals and institutions) have different images among themselves of what this democratization really means. The bottom-line is that '*without democratization of all actors, the learning society will continue to generate ever greater inequity and exclusion, and become ever more unstable*' (Field, 2006, p. 171).

Therefore, "reflecting as a learning activity" in the Surinamese context means that pupils can account for their own actions in given situations. Reflecting on their actions means that they link (possible) values to that action with which first a summative function can be activated by listing and identifying the values within personal actions. Next, this summative function of (self-)reflection can be used for the formative or developmental design of new learning experiences.

Learning Outcomes

'Raise your voice in the classroom' is based on pupils' orientation to themselves and their environment. It's founded on more internalized personality formation by learning to recognize, value and articulate one's own voice. In the orientation on their learning perspectives, 10–12-year-olds can also learn to connect their personal learning identity with the most appropriate learning pathway. Learning to reflect then entails that *pupils learn to reflect consciously and purposefully on themselves and others. They recognize, value and develop, through both collective and individual activities, new insights related to self-development and personal orientation to the environment in which they develop.*

For the teacher, this means contributing to the personal development of pupils. In doing so, the teacher generates an awareness of their role as global citizens by connecting them to their personal environment, upcoming professional identity and/or subsequent studies, other school subjects, and the broad social context. This preparation for global citizenship is an essential part of primary education.

Pupils can use the reflective mode to:

- Systematically name, assess and document their learning experiences.
- Derive essential personal strength and competencies and draw conclusions from this for their learning path and career formation.
- Lay a purposeful foundation for entry into professional life, for example, knowing how to deal with the proficiency requirements of being a teacher.
- Self-manage their competencies with the support of portfolio tools.
- Becoming aware of the value of learning achievements from all areas of life, taking them into consideration and deriving essential, personal strengths and competencies from that placement.
- Recognize career prospects and take realistic measures to plan personal and professional development.
- Gain self-responsibility and long-term management of the learning trajectory using the portfolio toolkit.

Value of Reflection

Everyone – including 10-12-year-olds, can be aware of their own talents and the value of their learning experiences to-date for later functioning in a particular context at a particular level. To understand this, it is important to be able to 'recognize and put into words' one's own talents and learning experiences. In addition, self-questioning is important for career development: what do I like to do and what can I actually do with that later on? What are my opportunities? What are the qualities I already have that I can build on? In essence, we are talking about self-reflection in which '*someone reflects to restructure their own experiences and/or knowledge*' (Korthagen, et al, 2002, p. 12).

Someone normally does reflective exercises not only individually, but also in pairs. After all, reflecting on one's own actions is enhanced if one also reflects on others, and shares this reflection. A teacher may guide and support the reflective learning process with the help of a manual on how to carry out reflective exercises, and provides examples of valuable informal, non-formal and formal learning experiences, a step-by-step plan, self-diagnostic tests, and descriptions of generic competences.

The outcomes of self-reflection may give purpose and direction to the value pupils already feel they have and on what they base this value. Once someone has a better understanding of potential development opportunities, and what fits their qualities and talents, it is possible to determine the outcomes of self-reflection in terms of social participation and identifying suitable further education pathways.

An outcome of self-reflection may be that pupils create a rough outline of a personal portfolio in which personal qualities and talents and valuable learning experiences can be collected. In addition to a description of favored activities, work experiences and hobbies, a person's portfolio can be supplemented with evidence that includes videos or photos. The evidence may be focused on the profession or job and the related (further) education on which the career or development aspiration is directed.

Table 2
Self-reflection

<i>Purpose</i>	a) Shaping the documentation of personal learning experiences and outcomes. b) Reflecting on the personal value of these experiences/results. c) Possibly and if required, organizing a peer reflection on self-reflection. d) Regularly answering the questions: Who am I? What have I done in my life so far? What is the value of these experiences? e) Providing a framework for maintaining a personal portfolio and creating personal action plans.
<i>Features</i>	f) It serves as a starting point for portfolio formation and assessment with a view to setting achievable learning goals, for creating career or social perspectives. g) It paints an authentic picture of personal values, strengths & weaknesses, passion and mission. h) It provides a personal advertisement: who am I? What are my abilities, expertise and motivations i) It is a reflective process that can be guided personally and/or in groups.
<i>Function</i>	Reflective
<i>Design</i>	Teacher
<i>Actors</i>	Pupil(s), teacher, parents
<i>Feedback</i>	Other pupils, teacher, parents

Source: Duvekot, 2016.

In the Classroom

The school period constitutes, as it were, the transition from the private domain of the family to the public domain of society, in which the pupil must engage post school. Precisely in this safe environment, the pupil can become acquainted with himself, with the other and with the world as it is and with himself in this world and in relation to the other. School can thus provide a training ground that equips pupils to manifest themselves as unique individuals alongside and with others for the betterment of the person and the world (Freire, 1970; Arendt, 1994).

Learning to reflect has two core elements, self-esteem and dialogue. Self-esteem focuses on seeing, acknowledging and valuing all facets of one's learning history, qualities, talents, and desires. Using reflective exercises for building self-esteem is accompanied by dialogues with others on one's findings by asking questions, listening carefully and adding insights where necessary. In the dialogue, exploring becomes a personal and therefore unique exercise that leads to an enriched perspective on the self. Being able to see oneself through the eyes of another enriches the image one has of oneself (Brinkgreve, 2019; Meijers, 2012). In addition, listening to each other expands one's own view of the world. Understanding that there are multiple perspectives increases empathy, develops connections with others, and gives you a more solid basis to choose your own position. Dialogue thus creates a commonality within which there is room for diversity and uniqueness (Arendt, 1958). Dialogue creates space to value yourself in the world. If one's qualities were only written down in a journal, for example,

they would not find appreciation “from the world”. So, we need each other to manifest ourselves.

The Manual

The teacher’s manual offers reflective exercises in four areas:

- A. Exercises about ‘me’.
- B. Exercises about ‘me at school’.
- C. Exercises about ‘me in the world’.
- D. Exercises about ‘me and my choices’.

These areas include all perspectives within pupils’ awareness that they are unique individuals with associated qualities and experiences. By learning to value this, a sense of inner authority can grow. This means that pupils will be better able to shape life for themselves and make their own choices from “the totality of their personality” (Duvekot, 2016).

Example. Photo Exercise, from area A

Objective

Becoming aware of what role personal life experiences play in ‘my’ personal development.

Assignment

Collect two photos that will help you tell who you are, where you are from and what your motivations are. We will ask you to use these photos to tell your story. Think of it as a two-to five-minute talk. The other pupils will ask positive questions about your presentation.

For your presentation, the following questions serve as a guide:

- Why did you choose these photos?
- What do they say about you?
- Describe the time in which they were taken?
- Who was important to you at that time?
- What were you concerned about then?
- What memories and feelings come to you when you look at them?
- Were there any significant events in your life during the time the photos were taken?
- Were there any significant changes in your life during the time they were taken?
- What do the photos say about where you are now in life?
- What qualities of yourself emerge from the memories associated with the photos?

So, learning to reflect begins with exercises in the first area focused on 'me', with exercises revealing 'my' interests and qualities. The next set of exercises (area two) is about getting to know oneself within the context of the school and learning in school. The world pupils encounter is primarily the world of the school, which can be a training ground for moving into the larger world.

The third area focuses on the pupil's place in the world within the diversity that characterizes this world. These exercises mainly aim at learning about the complexity of problems in the world and eventually taking a position in the world that fits the person the learner is at the deepest level.

Awareness in these three areas can help with the choices pupils need to make. When they have knowledge of their qualities and desires, when they know their talents, how they view current issues in the world, and what role they can play in the world, then they can make appropriate choices in life.

The fourth area is about making conscious choices in a world where many opportunities have been created by prosperity, differentiation of social systems and flexibility of the labor market, but where there is also detraditionalization. Pupils face a huge increase in career choices while the social context provides less direction; after all, there are fewer and fewer jobs or degrees that are sustainable for the rest of one's life (Habermas, 1992). To then make good choices, awareness of one's own identity is necessary. Therefore, the exercises focus on making a conscious choice for their next step in secondary education, thus having a knock-on effect in subsequent, ongoing career choices.

Piloting

The project was conducted in three phases:

1. The design phase focused (2021-2022) for developing the methodology with a teacher's manual and a pupil's workbook, a baseline measurement, and setting-up the digital platform.
2. The implementation phase (2023) with 12 master trainers being trained in conducting and supervising the exercises in the manual. These master trainers then trained teachers at the pilot schools spread across all educational districts in Suriname.
3. The final phase (2024) revolved around the analysis of project results. The yield for the target groups was examined and analyzed. The anchoring of the results among different stakeholders (primary education, secondary education, teacher training, ministry and education inspectorate) was also examined.

The analysis of the piloting showed what results had been achieved and how the reflective learning method could be anchored, disseminated and researched within/outside primary education. The impact of the method was significant at three levels.

The **micro level** of pupils and teachers in the pilot schools:

- Much enthusiasm: the learning method has been experienced as highly motivating for both teachers and pupils. The method can be integrated playfully into independent lessons about personal development and can also be easily integrated into subject-oriented lessons such as reading, writing, math, biology, etc.
- The teachers at the pilot schools are eager to spread the learning method to colleagues and other schools.

- The method is low-threshold and has little or no cost to be used.
- Training of incumbent teachers can be organized within schools, supported with digital lessons and knowledge exchange through the platform and the website <https://stem.sr>.

The **meso level** of organizations involved in and around education:

- Enthusiasm among the Pedagogical Institutes and the Education Inspectorate because of the accessibility, employability and added value of the method.
- School leaders can reduce school dropouts because the learning method motivates pupils to explore, makes them curious and increases the learning efficiency of other school subjects.
- Broad focus on target groups: not only the schools but also parents, inspection, ministry, educational institutes social parties, et al. are actively engaged.
- Direction of Ministry OWC is strengthened in the context of making ordinary primary education more developmentally appropriate.

The **macro level**:

- Broad focus on target groups: not only the schools but also parents, inspection, ministry, educational institutes social parties, et al. are actively engaged.
- Direction from the Ministry OWC can be strengthened in the context of making basic education more developmentally appropriate.

Analysis

The learning method has been widely embraced in Suriname as a valuable addition to programming education in its primary schools. It reinforces the transition to more developmental education in which pupils learn to be more independent and self-directed. This is not only important for their later career steps but also for their development within primary education. Being able to have your voice heard in the classroom means that pupils are more aware of their talents for the various school subjects. They learn that they have a personal learning style that, once the pupil has recognized it and the teacher 'hears and addresses' it appropriately, generates its own rhythm and connection to the lesson material.

Teachers learn to listen carefully to “the voices of their pupils” and thus can better guide them in their personal development. Even the parents gave feedback along the lines of “I see that my daughter enjoys going to school more,” “my son is all asking questions about my school days,” and “suddenly she is very interested in the history of our country,” and so on.

The method has also been embraced by the ministry and is now offered integrated within elementary school programming. The Inspectorate of Education includes the method in its regular consultation schedule of primary schools. The method is also being integrated into teacher training programs, and the ministry decided to develop a training module for all teachers in education in which they learn to utilize the method in their lessons.

This project proved to fit wonderfully with the ministry's developmental education vision (MinOWC, 2021b):

Education focuses on the competence development of all pupils and students throughout Suriname by providing a challenging and safe learning environment, where they will:

1. Be able to work independently.
2. Be able to follow their own learning path without getting stuck.
3. Be able to solve issues both independently and with others.
4. Become culturally aware so that they respect and appreciate cultural diversity and acquire attitudes, skills and knowledge to function in different cultures.
5. Learn to develop their talents and social-emotional well-being into critical citizens.

In addition to the structural integration of the outcomes, 'Raise your voice in the classroom' enhances a learning culture in which learning to reflect on one's actions is a fundamental condition for creating a sustainable career in everyone's (lifelong) learning, life and work. The extent to which people can autonomously make choices that best suit their qualities and desires depends strongly on their formation in primary education.

And VPL?

In general, learning to reflect at an early age has proven its success, at least in Suriname, as a useful approach to modernize education and make it more learner-centered and developmental. For VPL, it means that it will ensure that the young generation in Suriname is well prepared to use valuation- and assessment-processes to find themselves in the right subsequent education, jobs and career paths.

The pilot's main contribution to VPL lies in the personal competence sphere. The learning method demonstrably strengthens essential reflective skills of the 10-12 age group to make their voices heard during valuable VPL processes during their lifelong learning:

1. *Develop self-awareness*: reflecting helps students become aware of their own thoughts, feelings and behavior. This self-awareness is essential for validation processes in which you can recognize your own point of view in a conversation and understand how that point of view affects your interaction with others.
2. *Promote empathy*: through reflection, they learn to empathize with others and understand why someone else thinks or feels something. Empathy is a core component of VPL processes because it requires you to take others' experiences and perspectives seriously and integrate them into a validation dialogue.
3. *Encourage critical thinking*: reflection encourages students to ask questions and think beyond the obvious. Later in life, this helps in validation dialogues because you not only accept information from others, but also critically examine it and put it in a broader context.
4. *Learning to deal with differences*: reflection helps students see that multiple perspectives and truths can exist. This is essential for dialogic validation, which is not about winning in an argument, but about seeking understanding, agreement and developmentally appropriate choices together.
5. *Develop communication skills*: reflection also helps students think about how they communicate and how their message is received. This prepares them to later

communicate openly, respectfully and effectively in validation and career-oriented dialogues.

6. *Resilience and personal growth*: when students learn to reflect, they develop the ability to see mistakes and challenges as opportunities to learn. As a result, they are better able to deal constructively with criticism or dissent in dialogues about linking personal experiences to learning and work opportunities.

With these set of personal competences 'Raise your voice in the classroom' with its focus on learning to reflect on oneself and others results in a personalized process of self-awareness, self-esteem, and identity formation that may benefit everyone in life, especially since the focus on 'the self' is always placed in the context of the community.

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Prof. Dr. Ruud Duvekot (1960) studied Economic and Social History at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. His thesis 'Leren Waarderen' [Valuing Learning] (2016) analyzed the impact of validating prior (formal, non-formal and informal) learning experiences (VPL) on personalized learning, and the worlds of learning and working. At present his functions are: (1) director, Centre for Lifelong Learning Services (CL3S), (2) Professor 'Validation and Work-based Learning, NCOI University, the

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