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‘Honours futures’

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Talent development and networking: vision for a European future
Inspiration

“It should not be forgotten that one of the purposes of democracy is to provide each individual with the opportunity that is best for him (…) The ideal for democratic education good enough to meet the needs of the post-war world must not be security but excellence”

(Aydelotte 1944)
Honors in the Netherlands

Starting 20 years ago

Positive attitude, institutional responsibility and sparking desires

Critical attitude, questioning the need of honors

OECD 2016: “The Netherlands is known globally for its commitment to excellence, equity and innovation.”
Institutionalizing and anchoring

Path

Ruim baan voor talent
(‘Make way for talent’)

Results

Silent revolution towards a culture of excellence
Moving to international level
Definition

“Honors programs are selective study programs linked to higher education institutions. They are *designed* for motivated and gifted students who want to do more than the regular program offers. These programs have clear admission criteria and clear goals and offer educational opportunities that are more challenging and demanding than regular programs.”

1. Wolfensberger, 2015, p. 12; based on NCHC, 2010 and Wolfensberger et al., 2012
The purpose of honors

Legitimation questions keep coming back …

Look at honors and talent development from the perspective of three main societal problems
Transformation is needed
Sleepwalking
Commitment and honors community

Flourishing

“Evidence to date suggests that flourishing, a central component of complete mental health, is a desirable condition that any community, corporation or government would want to protect or promote in its citizens” ¹

Which questions do we need to answer to contribute to the flourishing of honors students?

Students and flourishing

Honors students form communities directed at personal development, collaboration, innovation and excellence. 1.

Research questions

- Does the discrepancy in culture between honors and regular programs prevent flourishing as honors students often face pressure to adjust to the standards within the regular program? 2,3
- What are the differences between honours students and regular students when it comes to their preferences for autonomy and structure and how do teachers connect to these preferences when guiding the students? 4

1. Tiesinga & Wolfensberger, 2014; Scager et al., 2012, Tiesinga et al., 2015 & in prep. 2. Kamans et al., 2015 & in prep. 3. NRO funded research project Hanze UAS, UTwente, UU, & UL. 4. NRO funded research UMCG, Hanze, Windesheim.
Making a difference:
Small steps, big leaps

https://youtu.be/l-0NvkuPHZI?t=1m32s
The limits of money
Academic competences and new social skills

What if in the future all doctors, violists or chess players can do what only the top 5% can do now?

• Mindful practice ¹
• Practical wisdom ²

Defining professional excellence

“Persons with outstanding achievement, or eminence”¹

A combination of characteristics, knowledge, skills, attitude and behavior - is necessary for outstanding accomplishments in a later life.

Research questions

- What are professional skills and behaviors that professionals demonstrate that make her/him perceived as excellent by peers?
- What are the overlapping characteristics of excellent professionals and how do those characteristics align with the learning outcomes in their honors programs?²

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1. Trost, 2000; 2. Sirius-funded research project Hanze UAS, Saxion and Rotterdam UAS at eight UAS in the Netherlands
Professional development and honors teachers

Effective ¹:
• Active knowledge construction
• Together with peers
• In relation with practice
• Evidence based

Model of teacher change ²:

Teacher training  Change in teacher behavior  Change in students

¹. Van Veen et al., 2012; ². Guskey, 2002
Teacher professionalization

Performing research in own educational practice:

• Bridge theory and practice \(^1,^2\)
• Role model \(^3\)
• Honours: Laboratories for Educational Innovation \(^4\)
• Most fruitful professionalisation \(^1,^5\)
• Evidence-based Education \(^5,^6\)
• Exchange of knowledge \(^7\)

Competitive moral pluralism
Networks serving the common good

International collaboration

“Internationalization is changing the world of higher education, and globalization is changing the world of internationalization.” ¹

The importance of cultures of expertise and clusters of excellence ²

The European Honors Council is a new network for mutual learning, international collaboration and co-creation.

“In the information age, networking is key. Network cultures are here to stay. However self-evident it is, collaboration is a foundation of network cultures”

Honors in Europe

Preliminary research results
Membership

Sharing and exchanging information are key

Membership is free until further notice, but it requires sharing of information

Organization in four committees

Become a member now at www.honorscouncil.eu
Transformation is needed

Commitment and honors community

academic competence & new social skills

Networks serving the common good
The European Honors Council (EHC) is a new European network around the subject of talent development in European higher education.

Open for individual membership from June 2, 2016!

Become a member at www.honorscouncil.eu
Share your talent. Move the world

Bright minds. Better future
More information

www.honorscouncil.eu

www.hanze.nl/excellentie

www.honorsineurope.com

www.uu.nl/geo/honours
Marca Wolfensberger

Expertise

Affiliations:

• Lector Talent Development in Higher Education and Society

• Honours director SGPL Faculty of Geosciences

Other positions:

• Acting President and co-founder European Honors Council
• Member Jury Excellent Schools (2012-2015)
• Fellow National Collegiate Honours Council (NCHC)