

## Synopsis

# The Honours Experience

Talent development through the eyes of honours students

This book is written by students, teachers and researchers of the Dutch national project group "The Honours Experience"

Pierre van Eijl and Albert Pilot (Eds.)

Author contributions by:

Laura van Angeren

Milou van Dommelen

Ninib Dibo

Pierre van Eijl

Vincent Gelink

Anne Hess

Daniël de Jong

Albert Pilot

Moana Proost

Jamila Schalken

Sanne Spil

## Preface

Why honours education? The many programmes that colleges and universities offer, are these not necessarily meant to give students the opportunity to develop their talents? Students, who put a lot of energy in the study, will they don't get much from it? And can the student not develop additional skills, such as initiative, courage, organizational skills, social skills, and more, through a commitment to other activities than his or her study and within student associations or organizations in the society? Such comments are often made by people who have their doubts about the strong rise of honours programmes in Dutch higher education; what they say is true.

Why honours education? Educational programmes are organized and regulated by definition, and that's good. As a student you have to know what you're getting. And educational programmes should ensure that students develop the knowledge and skills required by the professional or scientific field. The frames are fixed therefor. The programmes are as verified through accreditation procedures. So there is much regulated in every educational programme. However students differ in their questions and aspirations. Honours programmes offer students the opportunity to go beyond the fixed frames, to start from their own questions and ambitions within their studies. But then, as a student you should have the ambition to get more from the study than is allowed at the regular path.

Why honours education? Because it pays off! This is also reflected by this beautiful book, in which many honours students have their say about their honours experience. The opportunities offered by their educational programme to take, related to their study, something extra, often lead to surprising activities and results, steep learning curves and plenty of commitment. No doubt the honours experience which students describe here - arranged into what the authors call the "circle of talent development" - also provides a learning experience for teachers. What happens in honours education, offers a fresh new look at what is possible in the programmes, including the regular programmes.

I encourage everyone involved in honours programmes to read this book. It is on one hand a feast of recognition: "Yes, so it goes in honours programmes." On the other hand, the students provides readers a mirror: What is important for them? Offer honours programmes - which are extremely diverse - here indeed the room for their aspirations? It is a book everyone can learn from.

Rob van der Vaart  
Honours Dean, Utrecht University

## Contents

Overview: Circle of talent development .....	7
1 Identifying your drive .....	14
2. Choosing a trajectory of talent development .....	17
3. Crossing the threshold: choosing and be chosen .....	18
4. Meeting challenges .....	19
Interview: The unknowns in the assignments I found thrilling.....	21
5a. Developing talent together in a community .....	24
5b. Developing talent together in a culture of excellence.....	26
6. Getting coaching .....	27
7. Experiencing flow, dips and perseverance .....	29
Interview: Because you're honours students, you work more efficiently together .....	31
8a. Inspiring and creating.....	35
8b. Innovating and fostering entrepreneurship .....	37
9a. Achieving excellent results.....	39
9b. Achieving personal development .....	41
10. Continuing talent development in the growth mindset .....	43
11. Talent development for everyone .....	45
References .....	48

## **Why this book?**

This document is a summary of the book Honours Experience. We are very proud to present this book. "We" are the students, teachers and researchers of the project "The Honours Experience". After some years of hard work, interviewing, writing and rewriting, it succeeded. Together we have studied what drives an honours student. We did the honours students let themselves tell their experiences. This book gives a picture of how honours students think about their honours programmes. It gives an outline of how an honours programme actually looks like. It shows what inspires an honours student and for whom an honours programme is intended. You also get an insight into what constitutes an honours programme.

The initiative for this book began with a conversation within a group honours students, researchers and teachers about talent in honours programmes. The choice was honours programmes because that is where talent is central. Questions were: What are the experiences of honours students in their own words? What is the process of talent? And we can draw insights and tips that are useful to others? These questions formed the start of a project that led to this book. To answer these questions about talent, we interviewed forty honours students from six different institutions of higher education. So we got a glimpse of their process of talent development. In this book they talk about their experiences, adventures, challenges, dips and tips: talent development through the eyes of the student. Dozens of students in this book talked about what they find important, with funny anecdotes and sharp analysis of their development.

In addition to the students in this book also teachers did speak. Eight lecturers (of the students) are interviewed about teaching in an honours programme. The book provides a common thread in their findings and some sections linking them to research literature on talent development. In chapter 9, we explain the relationship with 21st-century skills, for which honours education can be seen as an example. Each chapter comes with a new topic with quotes from honours students and teachers.

The book is written by honours students and researchers and lecturers in the field of honours education from various universities in the Netherlands, edited by Pierre van Eijl and Albert Pilot (Utrecht University). It is intended as a source of inspiration for anyone interested in talent, in particular (future) honours students, parents, teachers and policy makers.

Take a look into the world of talent of ambitious young students!

On behalf of the project 'The Honours Experience, Pierre van Eijl, Utrecht, March 16, 2016

For further information: Pierre van Eijl (eijl0000@planet.nl) and Albert Pilot (albert.pilot@gmail.com)

Universities whose students participated as interviewee and / or author and other abbreviations of universities::

Windesheim	Windesheim University of Applied Sciences
HvA	University of Applied Sciences of Amsterdam
Hanze	Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen
UU	Utrecht University
HU	University of Applied Sciences Utrecht
ArtEZ	ArtEZ Institute of the Arts
HR	University of Applied Sciences Rotterdam
Saxion	Saxion University of Applied Sciences
VU	Free University Amsterdam
UvA	University of Amsterdam

## Overview: Circle of talent development

Pierre van Eijl, Albert Pilot and Laura Angeren

*"The freedom to decide what you do in the honours programme, has been very inspiring. If you see an opportunity, you can grab it yourself. Excellence, in my opinion, has more to do with attitude than with intelligence. Central it is seizing opportunities instead of letting opportunities go by, because it cost you nothing but time". (Ninib Dibo, honours student Saxion).*



Figure O.1: Focus on talent in honours programmes

### Talent in an honours programme

In recent years many honours programmes were introduced at universities and colleges. They are intended for students who want more than the regular programme offers them (Wolfensberger, Van Eijl, & Pilot 2012). By following an honours programme those students can better develop their talents.

But what really is meant by 'talent'? Learn these students to perform more difficult tasks, solve complicated sums or analyse difficult texts? Are these students now only get an A+? No!

To bring the practice of talent development in honours programmes in the picture, some forty honours students and honours alumni were asked about their talent, asking why they it started and what their experiences were in those programmes, in other words: what were their honours experiences? They answer the question how important the teacher and fellow students were in this process. We also interviewed eight of their teachers; their experiences are also included in the book. The answers of the students and teachers insight into the process of talent development. The process proved to be much more interesting than 'simply' learning to solve difficult problems (although that may be part of talent development).

### What we mean by talent?

Before we go deeper into talent development, we consider the question of what we mean in this book with talent. When we talk about talent in this book, we aim at the qualities that in anyone that can be further developed and can lead to exceptional results and outstanding performance. These qualities can relate to many domains in which qualities can be developed. In education, students can achieve good results in a particular domain, both in practical terms ("they have golden hands") and theoretically. For example, they can learn to work very systematically or learn to recognize and use their creativity. Also, to communicate clearly or they learn well together. Sometimes students in an honours programme discover the importance of taking the initiative and seizing opportunities.

Some of these qualities are also called 21st century skills, because graduates precisely need those

skills in this century. The following quote from Ton Peeters, coordinator of the honours programme Biology (UU), already gives an idea of the development of 21st century skills in an honours programme: "The honours programme stimulated a group of students to write a book together. It is important that they are responsible for the whole process, from the initial brainstorming to final publication. They are creative, they work together and are critical about themselves, each other and about the product. Students in this setting own their own learning: it works better than when anyone else dictates what and how to learn. The fun of learning is many times greater" (Ton Peeters, lecturer and teaching fellow, 21st century skills, UU, 2014). In chapter 9b we continue on skills and other abilities for the 21st century, such as opportunity recognition, benefit from multiple perspectives such as multidisciplinary collaboration and further creative and innovative thinking, solving complex multidisciplinary issues and intercultural skills.

### The circle of talent development

The process of talent development in an honours programme is central in this book. This process has several steps, from the start to the completion of the honours programme and beyond. Not every student goes through these steps in the same order, but they are often revealed in the interviews. For clarity, we have therefore arranged the steps in the "circle of talent development" (see Figure O.2), which was partly inspired by "The hero's journey", a book by Joseph Campbell (1949).



Figure O.2: The ten steps into the circle of talent development

We first describe the steps the circle, illustrated with brief quotes from students interviews. These steps will be elaborated further in the relevant chapters.

#### Step 1: Identifying your drive

The start of the process of talent is shown in Step 1: identifying your own passion, your drive; the students identify what they want to do more than their regular curriculum provides. An example: "Looking for a little extra, a chance I could grab to distinguish me from the rest" (Jamila Schalken, honours student HVA). Often it is also about doing the study activities in a different way, which gives the student an extra challenge. For some students, but also for their environment, their talents are

not visible yet, which is called "latent talent". In Chapter 1 we elaborate on it.

*Step 2: Choosing a trajectory of talent development*

Students who need more challenge, look for new opportunities. Following an honours programme is in this way an opportunity that comes on the student's path. An example: "Do not stop and go for your dreams, because these efforts will be recognized and so you will always produce something" (Elsemie Geerdink, honours student Saxion). One way in which a student can get acquainted with a honours programme is to get information from a student who is already an honours student. Some schools ask honours students as ambassadors for the programme, and ask them to provide information to their fellow students. The choice to participate in an honours programme may be for students a part of the development of their personal leadership. This is the ability to make decisions in a good way in their own lives. In Chapter 2 we discuss an example of an honours course in which development of personal leadership is a key activity.

*Step 3: Crossing the Threshold: choosing and be chosen*

The choice to participate in an honours programme must come from both sides: the student must choose, but the teachers of the honours programme must also allow the student to be admitted, students must meet the selection criteria. They often have to write a motivation letter and sometimes there is an admission interview. An example: "Finally, I was invited to an admission interview" (Alexander Oude Elferink, honours student Windesheim). The teachers also consider the study results and consider especially whether the student is really interested in the honours programme, has a proactive attitude and a capacity for growth. Chapter 3 also draws attention the principle of 'giving and taking': both the teacher and the student is expected to contribute actively.

*Step 4: Meeting Challenges*

Once in the honours programme, the challenge and the actual learning really start. Students get complex, authentic assignments and projects that are often linked to real problems and real clients. An example: "We had a lot of guest lectures, which were not all equally interesting. But then came the team assignment for the police organisation and that was unwise cool" (Iris Jansen, honours student Windesheim). The honours students sometimes work together with students from other disciplines and with teachers or even external clients. This differs from the approach in mainstream education and provides a challenge for the student and the supervisor. The teacher must include dealing with the differences between students and this may pose dilemmas for the teacher as well. An investigation into this aspect is discussed in Chapter 4.

*Step 5a, b: Developing talent together in a community and culture of excellence*

Students usually study not only individually but together with other motivated students and usually are very positive about this in the honours programme. By working together, they come to the exchange of new ideas. An example: "The way we work and the working atmosphere within the honours programme are a world apart from the regular education" (Guido Diana, honours student Windesheim). The networks of contacts within the programme often grow into an 'honours community'. In the interviews students speak with great appreciation about their community. A characteristic of these communities is the culture of excellence: encouraging each other, working together and achieving a result that matters! An example: "In honours programmes students are more motivated. Those students are highly motivated to invest time and energy. They all want to show a good result" (Iris Jansen, honours student Windesheim). Chapter 5 discusses a study in honours communities and a culture of excellence.

*Step 6: Getting coaching*

Coaching can make the difference in talent development. The teacher can help a student to become on track and ensure that his or her talent development is really successful. To achieve this, the coach

helps the student from his comfort zone to enter into the 'zone of proximal development' and to take new steps. An example: "You were not told what to do, but ideas came from two sides" (Niels van de Kamer, honours student UU). In Chapter 6 both students and teachers tell about their experiences with coaching.

#### *Step 7: Experiencing flow, dips and perseverance*

An important experience in the talent development process is to get the feeling of a 'flow': everything seems to go without saying, and the student is studying in an optimal state of development. An example: "Almost the entire period honours it felt like a flow! Apart from the beginning, I had it in retrospect some anxiety whether I would be able to handle the additional programme" (Lise Schampaert, honours student HU). But there may also dips occur, which may constitute a serious obstacle. The identification of a dip and overcoming the dips, need resilience and perseverance of the student. In chapter 7 an investigation is discussed about grit, combining passion and prolonged persistence in reaching success.

#### *Step 8a: Inspiring and Creating*

Some problems require new solutions, for which creativity is important. The use of one's own creative ideas and moments of inspiration is important to move forward. There is also courage needed! Chapter 8a focuses on aspects of the creative process, such as problem finding, the design challenge, fostering a creative atmosphere, but also resistance to change, which means that not everyone in advance is positive if new ideas are put forward. An example: "Everyone has ideas, but you should be able to explain exactly what this entails, even people from other disciplines who do not immediately see the benefit of a product" (Sanne Vermeulen, honours student HU).

#### *Step 8b: Innovating and undertaking*

Some ideas can be turned into something that has concrete practical value: an innovation. An example: "In the Future Search course I was with a group to develop an app that was related to injury prevention in sports" (Leander Boelee, honours student HU). As an illustration, in section 8b this honours course about learning innovation is discussed. The aim is to generate new ideas and to convert these into something that is relevant in practice; it requires entrepreneurial behaviour of students. Research on seeing and grabbing opportunities (opportunity recognition) will be discussed in Chapter 8b.

#### *Step 9a: Achieving excellent results*

Efforts can lead to excellent performance. When and in what ways is an achievement excellent? That is discussed in chapter 9a. An example: "I definitely feel to have delivered an excellent performance. When I look at my thesis, it contains all five honours competencies of Rotterdam University of Applied Science" (Juliette Wever, honours student HR). The contribution of students to organize the programme and products for external clients can be part of the achievements.

#### *Step 9b: Achieving personal development*

Equally important is the personal development because it was often mentioned by the interviewed students. An example: "There is a lot of freedom allowing you much more to come to personal development, because there is much room to get to know yourself and figure out how you learn best" (Kim Tulp, honours student Saxion). In section 9b a comparison is drawn between the skills that students in their honours programme acquire, the 21st century skills.

#### *Step 10: Continuing talent development in the growth mindset*

If a project or task is completed within an honours programme, then a new project comes in many programmes in which again (parts of) the circle of talent development follows. This relates in particular to step until 9. Talent development does not simply stop after of the honours programme,

but grows into a "way of life as the honours alumnus continues to develop himself or herself. An example: "The honours programme has had great influence on my further study and work. I decided, instead of immediately going to work and to start with an house and garden, but first searching for more adventures "(Lise Schampaert, honours student HU). To identify opportunities for growth and to address a growth mindset is important. That is the mindset to tackle new challenges and not to set them aside. Through this approach, a person further develops.

In Chapter 11 we discuss the theme of a 'talent development for everyone' with tips from the student interviews and we describe the potentials for additional talent development outside of the honours programme.

### **The journey of the hero**

The choice of the circle of talent development as an organizing principle in this book is inspired by the 'journey of the hero ', described by the anthropologist Joseph Campbell in his famous book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). The hero is someone who is taking on a journey from an inner urge or something outside to get something done or find something special, often an elixir. Steps from this trip that resemble the circle of talent development, include leading up to the trip (1 and 2), the crossing of a threshold (3) entering into a challenge (4), getting help from a mentor and other helpers on the way (5 and 6), experiencing a crisis (the dip) and getting out there (7), gaining new insights and opportunities to help his fellows (8 and 9). After the trip the hero, enriched by the experience, again shows to find his or her way into the 'normal' life to bring the achievements in practice. There also are again new challenges waiting (10).

Joseph Campbell describes the 'cyclical' journey of the hero as an archetypal event, which does not always have to involve all the steps. Just like the 'circle of talent development'. Also the order of the steps may vary. The result of the trip is not only that the hero has something accomplished, but also that he "grows" and personally becomes "wiser". In the introduction to his book, Campbell displays the central idea of the journey of the hero again:

*"A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man."*

The steps in the 'journey of the hero' have been an inspiration for many artists. George Lucas has these steps, for example, used in the making of his Star Wars movies: Luke Skywalker was the 'hero'; he is depicted in Figure O.3 with his light saber.



Figure O.3: The hero of Star Wars, Luke Skywalker with his light saber

Joseph Campbell's thinking is often summarized up in his motto "Follow your bliss", or "Follow your heart." We will discuss this in chapter 11, when it comes to talent development for all.

### **The teacher and the circle of talent development**

For the activities in the circle of talent development are teachers of great importance. The teachers in the honours programme are the ones who design the tasks and create opportunities for the students to achieve the required talent, without pinning everything down." They are also the ones who guide the students and encourage them, giving feedback and review. There is need for preparation. In an interview, Ron Weerheijm, coordinator of the honours programme at the Rotterdam University of Applied Science, said that he therefore requires new teachers to advance a scenario: "What could happen and what should I be prepared for? Otherwise, the teacher falls back on old teaching and the dynamism of talent is away. The teacher must be prepared for the problems he may encounter." In addition, in various institutions courses on teaching honours programmes are organized for new honours teachers. Attention is paid to both the design, the intervention and evaluation of honours programmes (for example Coppoolse et al., 2013, p. 127).

In the chapter on coaching (Chapter 6) the role of the teacher in talent development is elaborated. Educational institutions have for teachers various means to prepare for their other roles. There are courses organized for them and there are networks of teachers, communities and other creative and informal exchanges. Chapter 11 provides tips for teachers, which are derived from the student and teacher interviews.

### **Observing talent of honours students**

It can sometimes be very amazing to see what honours students have done and what their experiences are. No two students are the same, each student is a unique person, and that is also the strength of a good honours programme: students have their own ideas and these ideas should get the opportunity to come to realization. So talent can truly flourish.

Steps of the circle of talent development are not only for honours students interesting, but for every student who wants to develop its capabilities further. Any student who is considering to launch a process of talent development and wants to know where he or she starts working, can use this book watch other students who started this process. In Chapter 11, "Talent for All" we will give tips on the different steps. For students who are already in the process of talent development, reading can be a feast of recognition but also providing them with new ideas.

### **Structure**

The circle of talent development is the organizer of this book, but also a map for the reader. Each step out of the circle refers to a chapter in this book. At the end of each chapter key elements of tips, insights and considerations for the development of their talents are summarized. In Chapter 11, "Talent for All" are tips that apply not only to (future) honours students, but also for other interested parties and honours teachers. To give you an idea of how an individual student takes the talent development process, we have included some truncated interviews in this book. The complete interviews of students and the Dutch book are available (only in Dutch) as pdf on [www.honoursexperience.nl](http://www.honoursexperience.nl)

In this book we used in addition to interviews, scientific research that is related to the development of talent. As usually we refer to the sources through the author's name and the year of publication. At the last pages of the book a list of the literature referred to is provided.

In each chapter also teachers of the interviewed students are quoted. They talk about their approach to the honours programmes and their experience with their honours students.

The interviewed honours students and teachers come from various universities of Applied Science (Windesheim College, Rotterdam University of Applied Science, Hanze University of Applied Science Groningen, Utrecht University of Applied Science, Saxion University of Applied Science, University of Applied Science at Amsterdam, ArtEZ Institute of the Arts) and research universities (Utrecht University, University of Amsterdam and VU University Amsterdam).

### **Key points of the circle of talent development**

We can see the core of the circle of talent development with a number of points:

- Talent begins by addressing a challenge and is continued in work on a challenge.
- Talent development requires not only individual work but also cooperation. Interaction with fellow students and coaches provides inspiring examples to develop new perspectives and insights.
- Honours programmes offer many opportunities to acquire 21st century skills (see also Section 9b).
- Opting for talent development is entering into an adventure which outcome is still uncertain. This asks from students initiative, dedication and ingenuity and leads often to unusual and surprising results.

## 1 Identifying your drive

### Pierre van Eijl and Albert Pilot

*"I found not enough challenge in the regular programme: too little intellectual challenge, it was too big and for me the teacher was too much focused on the class as a whole. The choice for the research project in the honours programme was aligned with my wish for more freedom. With this programme I could look beyond the subject of my study". (Stefan Sweijen, honours alumnus UU).*

### Motives for choosing an honours programme

Students who think about choosing an honours programme or another track of talent development within their institution, have to learn more about it and then to decide whether or not to participate. But why would anyone do that? It is not immediately clear to every student. An honours programme often has additional meetings and requires extra efforts. Possibly fellow students find it strange when someone is going to do this, because what is actually the added value of doing an honours programme? Anyone who wants to take a step on the way of talent, can come to a point where they are wondering this question. Not taking that challenge actually sounds as the easiest option: this takes less effort and you can spend more time on other things and you do not really have to worry. Yet there are many students who choose for an honours programme. Here we look at their motives and their drive.

Identifying your drive is the first step in the circle of talent development (see Figure 1.1). In “the journey of the hero” of Joseph Campbell (see the section ‘Overview’), this is the moment when the hero feels to be called to go on adventure and to travel to an unfamiliar area. Often the hero initially is reluctant and do not really want to do this, but a mentor can help him or her in the decision. Sometimes the hero continues to refuse, for example, from a sense of fear, insecurity, inadequacy or duty. Refusal puts, according to Campbell, adventure into the opposite. Enclosed by boredom, hard work and culture, the hero loses the strength to achieve significant, positive action and he will be a victim to be rescued.

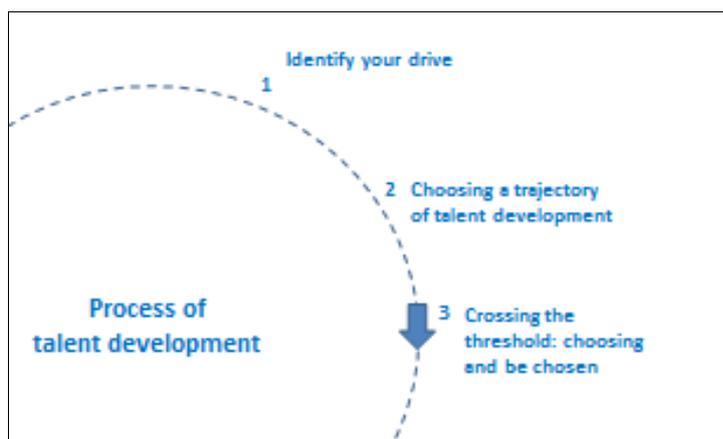


Figure 1.1: Identifying your drive

This chapter is about:

- seeking your own drive
- hidden talent

### *The search for the own drive*

In the interviews honours students are surprisingly enthusiastic when responding about the reasons for choosing an honours programme. It starts with the challenge that an honours programme can offer them. Or in the words of the students: "(...) a chance I could grab to distinguish me from the rest," and "My interest was there and just the drive and the wish to do something that is relevant." The interviews also show the diversity of motives for choosing to participate in an honours programme: "I was really looking for a little extra so I would stand apart from the group of regular students. Because then an employer might choose faster for you than for other students because you showed that you can do more and want more. You are different from a student who has just passed the exams. I missed that extra challenge very much within the regular programme. It does not fascinate me to get an A+ or B" (Jamila Schalken, honours student HVA). Another student: "I got a letter that I met the requirements and that I could apply for the honours programme. I had never heard of it before. My reasons for choosing the honours programme were time and added value, especially the English appealed to me. I also think that if it can, you should always do your best to reach for the highest" (Karleen Louis-Nieboer, honours student Windesheim).

Next to the challenge, also developing as a person is considered to be important. Two students say: "We are looking for challenge and the possibility to think more 'out of the box' to give our own vision and mission more chances" (Angela de Leeuw and Floor de Fockert, honours students HR). With many students it is not one thing but a combination of reasons: "I wanted to do more next to my studies. I noticed that I wanted at that time more depth, but also broadening in my studies. At that moment I did not think about personal development, but now that would be the decisive reason to do it!" (Sascha Bijman, honours student Hanze). Another student says, "For me these past two years in the honours programme were more than just a broadening in terms of knowledge, but they have given me also the opportunity to develop myself as a person. For me it was a challenge to find out what I really liked and to improve myself through feedback. To let people give me feedback, was the most difficult. If we talk about a challenge, this was definitely a challenge" (Harmjan Oonk, honours student Saxion).

There may also be reluctance in the beginning to get involved in an honours programme: "At a lecture in my first year we got a presentation of the honours programme. My first reaction was: I cannot do this! I'm not good enough. But, then I thought, if I can do, all the extras are worthwhile in view of the labour market and in developing yourself more than anybody else. I wanted to do something different than what everyone else is doing. Not better, but different" (Sterre Raterman, honours student UU).

### *Invisible talent*

Some students say that they have had early doubts about their participation. A student says: "In the beginning I thought, this is really not for me! But looking back on the first year I saw that it was not so difficult" (Esther Beekman, honours student UU). Possibly plays the phenomenon of invisible or "latent" talent (see Figure 1.2) a role as an honours alumnus says: "There are many latent talents, students who have the potential but they just are not going to follow an honours programme" (Stefan Sweijen, honours alumnus UU).

**Key points of step 1 Identifying your drive**

The core of step 1 is displayed with the following points:

- Anyone who wants to take a step on the route of talent development, will wonder at some point in time whether the extra effort and risks are worth this step.
- Drive may related to the interest in something, or the wish to contribute anything; but enthusiasm may also stem from boredom in the regular programme and the culture of mediocrity.
- Not all talents are previously visible sometimes the latent talent is not seen (see figure 1.2). During a process of talent development more talents can emerge.

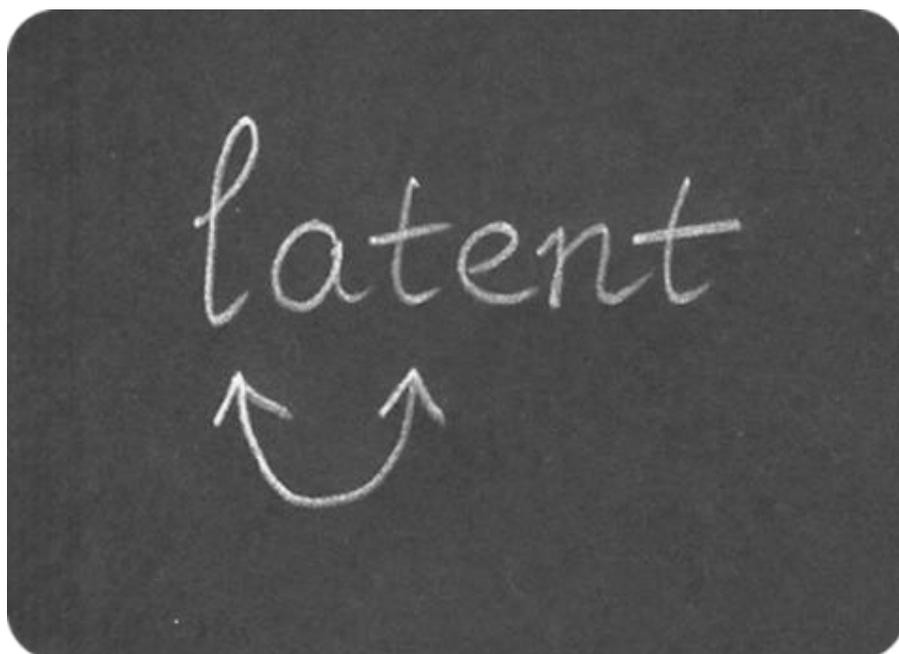


Figure 1.2 Hidden talent

	The student is conscious of her/his talent	The student is unconscious of her/his talent
Talent is visible for others	<b>1Talent</b>	<b>3 Latent talent</b>
Talent is not visible for others	<b>2 Latent talent</b>	<b>4 Latent talent</b>

Figure 1.3 Types of latent talent

## 2. Choosing a trajectory of talent development

**Pierre van Eijl and Milou van Dommelen**

*"I wanted to participate in the programme first because it is very good on your CV. But the main reasons were surely based on the lack of challenge in the regular programme and I wanted to get more out of my studies, and also getting to know myself better "(Floor Sijtsma, honours student Hanze).*



Figure 2.1 Choosing a trajectory of talent development

### Key points

- If you choose for talent development, you should do it because you're interested in it, and not for your CV, because this is not the focus of talent development in an honours programme.
- Talent development is unique: your route is not the same as that of another student.
- The move to talent development is also a step towards developing personal leadership.
- It is important to look for a match between what you want to learn and how you want to learn, and what an honours programme you has to offer.



Figure 2.2: Searching for a match between the student and the honours programme

### 3. Crossing the threshold: choosing and be chosen

Pierre van Eijl

*"First, I was selected because in my first year I passed my exams with an average of more than 7.0. If I was interested, I had to send an email and to indicate my interest. Then I received a form about my motivation that I had to send with my Europass CV and an overview of my academic performance. I was then invited for an admission interview. Selection criteria included the match between the wishes of students, the design of the programme and the distribution of participants from different programmes."* (Alexander Oude Elferink, honours student Windesheim).



Figure 3.1: Choosing the familiar way or something new?



Figure 3.2 Crossing the threshold: choosing and be chosen

#### Key points

- Interest in talent development is not enough, there must be a match between you and the programme to be admitted.
- In an interview for admission or selection it should be clear both for you as a student and the teacher that there is a match between you and the honours programme.
- The focus is on your motivation, enthusiasm and what the honours programme has to offer. Marks, ability for self-reflection, creativity and perseverance are further on important.

## 4. Meeting challenges

**Pierre van Eijl, Sanne Spil and Albert Pilot**

*"Then came the assignment for the team from the police organisation and that was unwise cool. There were also dips in between, because sometimes that honours year was very heavy, but my fellow students and my parents helped me over the dips. And the honours teachers helped also, and yes, it was just really fun to do."* (Iris Jansen, honours student Windesheim).

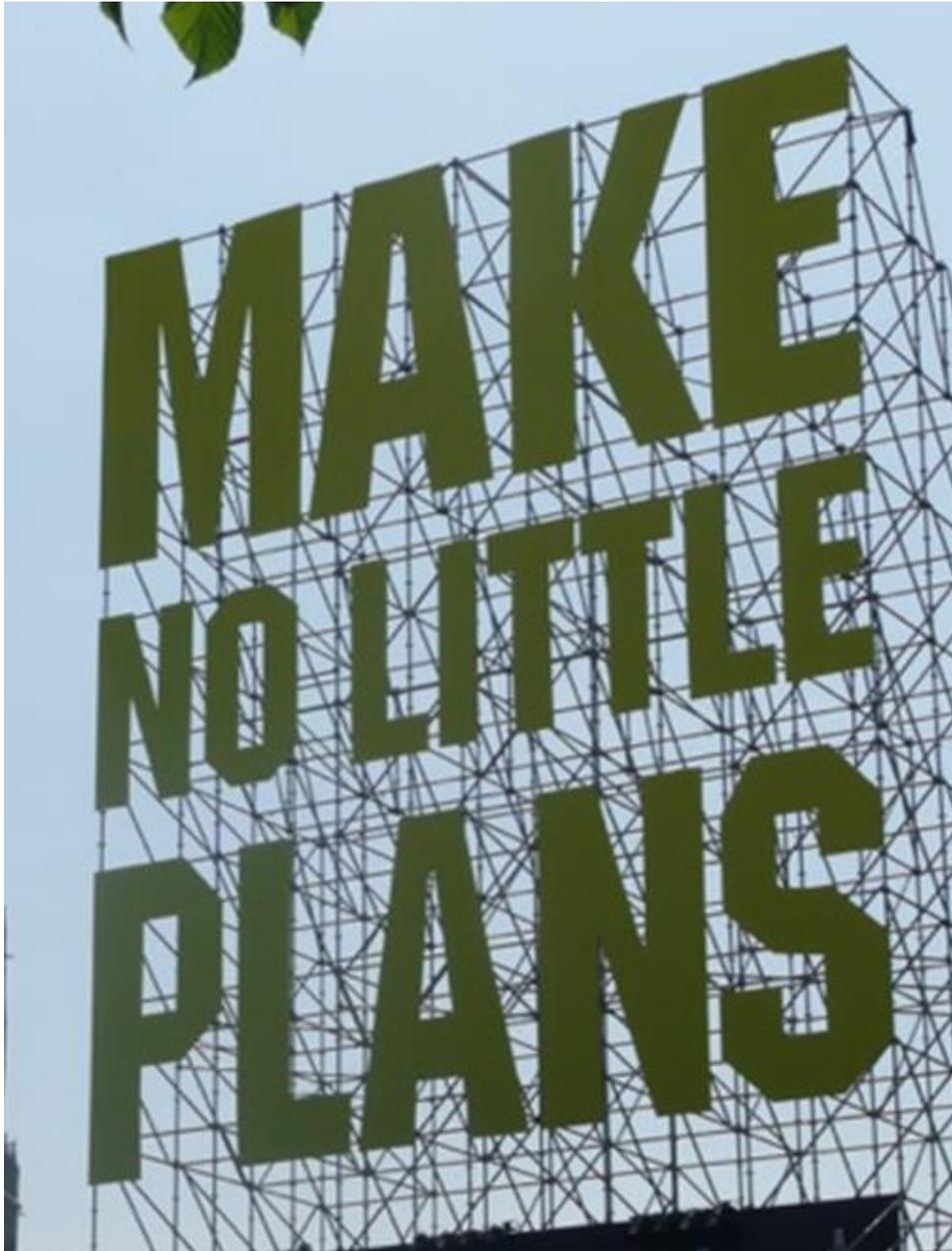


Figure 4.1: Addressing challenges



Figure 4.2 Meeting challenges

### Key points

- A challenge must suit your interests and abilities, that stirs your intrinsic motivation.
- Your drive for a problem can lead to major commitment and focus.
- Working on own ideas and choosing subjects gives extra energy!
- Just entering into a challenge can lead to new insights and skills.
- Developing talent can in many different ways. It depends not only on you as a student but also on the challenges and opportunities of the programme.
- The combination of challenge and freedom on the one hand and the deadlines and final demands (bounded freedom) on the other hand, can be very stimulating.
- Real problems encourage you more than routine tasks to come up with a solution.

## Interview: The unknowns in the assignments I found thrilling

### Iris Jansen (Windesheim)

Iris is studying Social Work (SPH) at Windesheim College and did in 2012/2013 the one year honours programme Social Innovation. Iris did along with a group of students a.o. a business assignment, for the National Organization of the police about how its real-time department can use social media . That was the culmination of her honours activities.



Figure 4.2: Iris Jansen

#### **The start of my honours program**

*I saw a message on the website of Windesheim and became curious. But I doubted very much in the beginning. Can I do it? After talking to my parents, I have chosen to go for it. Then I had an interview about my motivation, who I am, what do I want to give and take? Part of the conversation was in English.*

#### **Company Assignment**

*The first semester consisted of an individual assignment and a group assignment. The second semester involved the company assignment. I Together with a team of honours students I investigated for the National Organization of the police how they can use social media in its real-time department. That was the culmination of my honours activities. The results of this project team, we have presented in a large hall with interested persons: representatives from the police unit, teachers, fellow students and parents. I also had to write an individual reflection on the process. I am very proud that we've managed to bring this project to a successful conclusion, it was a great challenge and experience.*

#### **The most important experience in my honours programme**

*The feeling of victory was my main experience. In the honours program, I found the unknowns in the missions thrilling. I was accustomed to evade these situations. But during the honours I have experienced my potentials, even though sometimes things go wrong. Sometimes we had to do the assignment again, but that did not matter. I've learned that you learn from mistakes and become wiser. I've got a lot more confidence in myself. The honours programme consisted of tasks and Monday sessions with guest speakers mainly on the practice of social innovation, so with lecturers from outside the university and with discussions about their models and theories. With a project group I spoke at least once every two days on our assignment, project topics and personal subjects. with the entire group honours students I spoke mainly on the Monday night meetings and sometimes through Facebook. I talked to them much less often than to the students of my project.*

### **Assignment from the police**

*The assignment for the National Unit of the police began on the night this unit came to explain the assignment. The first question of the police was about the relation between the police and social media. The question which we have kept us busy was: how can social media help the investigation process? We got a lot of freedom to form a team with students from different disciplines and then to make the task more concrete, and specific. There were practical supervisors available from the police, and from the honours programme of Windesheim there were two supervisors. We gathered much information by ourselves and we have talked to people across the country and collected information. We got the opportunity to fill in a lot of ourselves and made our own choices. It was very challenging and inspiring, but also very hard work, because time flies. Such an assignment, moreover, I could not have done in my regular programme; you can only do that within the honours programme. There are also group assignments in the regular programme but this was larger, more independent and multidisciplinary.*

*This also gave an experience of flow between February and June; it happened very quickly, especially at last. In the beginning of the honours programme I had a high motivation, but has declined somewhat in the first semester because we had a lot of guest lectures, which were not all equally interesting. But then the assignment came from the police and that was unwise cool. I was on the evening of the presentation of the results also hostess, because I found it all very interesting. There were dips in between, because sometimes that honours year was very heavy, but my fellow students and my parents helped me over the dips. And the honours teachers helped also, and yes, it was just really fun to do.*

### **Self-regulation**

*In mainstream education you are very much regulated by the teacher, but in the honours programme, especially in the second semester when we worked on this task for the police, it was quite different. Then we were allowed to go our own way, choosing what we wanted to learn and that made a big difference. Much emphasis was laid on self-regulation in the honours programme, and yes, that meant to me a remarkable switch in my study approach. But I think the guidance by the teacher is also sometimes easy, it is spoon-fed, but also comfortable. Gathering of teachers knowledge in a subject, Fortunately I also like this. Self-direction and guidance by teachers should thereby be for me in a good balance.*

### **Assessment**

*The assessment of the results went by the teachers of the honours programme through an evaluation form, with input from the clients from the police organization. We were very happy with the assessment. We worked hard, learned a lot and the clients were quite satisfied.*

### **Teamwork**

*It was important that the team consisted of students from different disciplines, so there was a heterogeneous multi-disciplinary team with also input from business administration and journalism, which was also very important for motivation, and multidisciplinary contributions came from fellow students during the discussions on the assignment. Students of business had very different perspectives on proposals while I come from the social side and much less consider the costs. That gave fascinating discussions between students from different backgrounds. In the discussions the multidisciplinary input appeared clearly to be valuable. Each student had a different perspective on an issue from his own background.*

### **Tutors**

*The teachers acted mostly as counselors and coaches. I thought it was important that they gave us tips and sometimes helped to go on. They were helping with brainstorming, and by asking critical*

*questions. We were busy with our process and if we got stuck, we called there the supervisors to think with us. I found this fine. If I need help, I ask for it. Verbal feedback from the teachers was very valuable. I could ask what was meant by the teachers. I learnt much from their help.*

**The next step**

*I am going into the last year of my bachelor. The honours activities have had a clear influence on what I want to do next. I pick up new things faster than before the honours. I see faster the challenge of new projects instead of that it frightens me. I also learned that I find the police a nice organization. I'm investigating in what way I can support the police with my expertise. For example, when I have done a university master, it seems to me interesting to work as a behavioral scientist with the police. I also think that collaborating in a multidisciplinary teams is fun. I want to do in my work something with it. But I do not know if that is possible. But dreams can. With my team I still contact regularly. Once every four months, we eat together and that rotates. We have been doing that for a year already.*

## 5a. Developing talent together in a community

Jamila Schalken, Pierre van Eijl and Albert Pilot

*"I worked within a team on an assignment for a business organisation. I consider that team as my personal honours community. The way of working and the working atmosphere within the honours programme are a world that is very different from the regular programme. I often feel that within my groups in the regular programme several teammates only focus on getting their diploma. In a team with honours students I felt that this was surpassed and that everyone participated because of their intrinsic motivation. This is what I could see because the honours students just do that little bit extra to get an excellent result, for example by agreeing to meet at a night off on Skype and get the project going." (Guido Diana, honours student Windesheim).*



Figure 5a.1: A variety of students in an honours community



Figure 5a.2 Developing talent together in a community

### Key points

- Productive communication can stimulate talent development.
- Communities, but also other networks of contacts are important in talent development.
- Participants in a community experience a sense of community that binds them together.

- Communities can consist of students, but also teachers and parties in the field can participate.
- New initiatives and cooperating with others, are important for your talent development.
- Contact can be face to face as well as online through social media.

## 5b. Developing talent together in a culture of excellence

Pierre van Eijl and Daniël de Jong

*"The atmosphere in the honours programme is different than in the regular programme. In the regular programme, we also have a lot of fun, but my classmates there are less driven to create a good product. It is a culture of mediocrity. Those honours students are more motivated. They are highly motivated to invest their time and energy. They all want to arrive at a good result. But the contacts with them also brought a lot of fun. We discussed not just about assignments, but also about personal subjects. I got to know them better and that also led to friendships." (Iris Jansen, honours student Windesheim).*



Figure 5b.1: Towards a culture of excellence



Figure 5b.2 Developing talent together in a culture of excellence

### Key points

- Studying in an honours programme means studying in a culture of excellence.
- A culture of excellence means that you put energy in your tasks, going to make the most of yourself, also encouraging others and trying to achieve results that matter.
- A culture of excellence does not come by itself but needs a cultural switch from those involved to go for the highest results.
- Central to the culture of an honours programme is the interaction between students and teachers and students generating enthusiasm, and a good atmosphere, and fostering innovation.

## 6. Getting coaching

Milou van Dommelen and Pierre van Eijl

"There was a lot of interaction with my supervisor. She saw that we were enthusiastic and gave constructive criticism. You were not told what to do, but ideas came from two sides, including the 'lost letter-research. Not everything was decided in advance. That was an important difference with the regular programme. In the regular programme much more will be determined in advance, in the way of 'this is the intention and we want you to perform so, and then you get a mark for it.'" (Niels van de Kamer, honours student UU).



Figure 6.1: Stand out from your comfort zone



Figure 6.2 Getting coaching

### Key points

- The zone of proximal development is not only about content but also about personal development.
- Talent development requires that you get out of your comfort zone; which can be emotionally difficult.
- Coaching your talent development is only effective if you come with questions and take initiatives by yourself.
- For coaching personal development a bond of trust between coach and student is needed.

- A coach can ask provocative questions that will stimulate your thinking and pushes you to go a step forward without giving you a solution.
- If you help others with questions and tips you can learn a lot of coaching.

## 7. Experiencing flow, dips and perseverance

Moana Proost, Pierre van Eijl and Albert Pilot

"I've always experienced assessments in honours programmes as very pleasant and stimulating, because you got a lot of feedback from your teachers and then you understand by what you've really learned in the previous year. This gives you an incentive for the next year. I consider an assessment not as an exam, but rather as an opportunity to get more out of my studies. But certainly I also have had moments when it was difficult in my honours programme." (Floor Sijtsma, honours student Hanze).

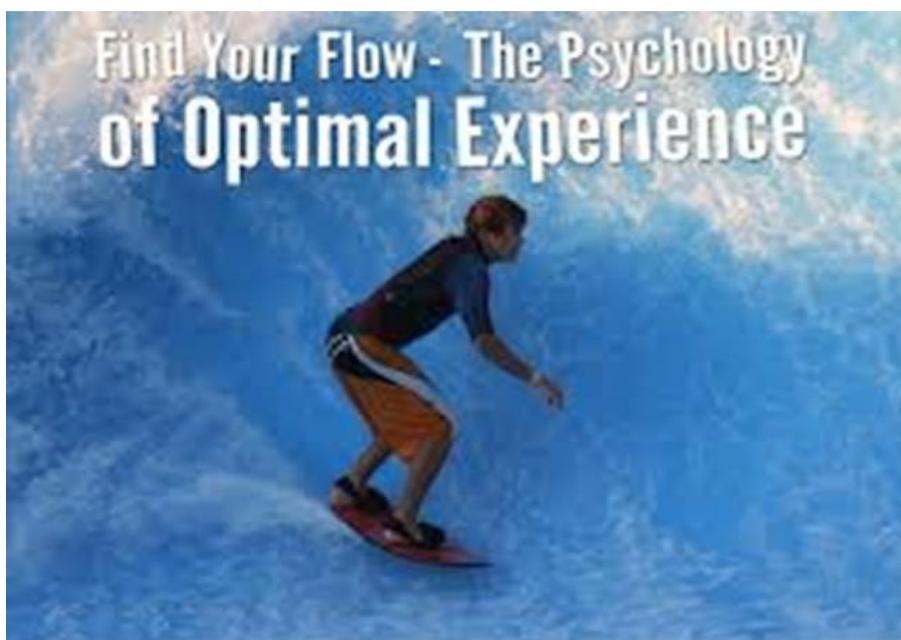


Figure 7.1: Find your flow!

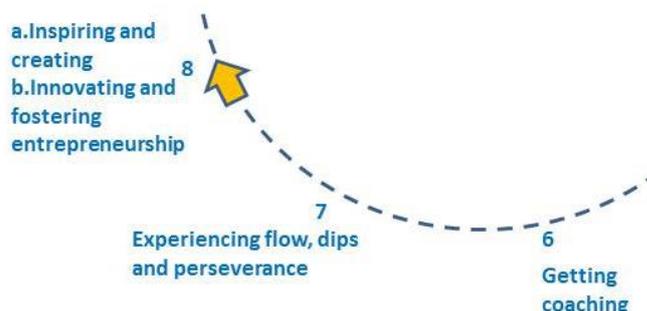


Figure 7.2 Experiencing flow, dips and perseverance

### Key points

- By taking up challenges that suit you and that you can handle, you get more chances to get into the flow.
- If you're bored in your study or experience much frustration, then you are probably not optimally challenged.

- A clear goal for yourself gives you focus for your studies.
- You can try to rely on your intelligence in an honours programme, but also interest, creativity, perseverance and grit are required.
- Contact with teachers and fellow students can be a stimulus to get into the flow and to get quick insight into your dips; which you then easier can overcome.
- A dip often turns out to have been an important learning experience.

## Interview: Because you're honours students, you work more efficiently together



Figure 7.2: Niels van de Kamer

### Niels van de Kamer (honours student Utrecht University)

Niels took the honours programme at the Department of Human Geography and Planning at Utrecht University.

#### What were the main activities in your honours programme?

*I took part in a project in the honours programme in which we could work on university research in Economic Geography. The idea was to "look behind the scenes, but it also came possible to get involved yourself in an investigation. That was already in the first year of my study and it was also the first year of the honours programme. The research project was still in its early stages and the researchers asked us to make an inventory of the areas that might be addressed. We did different observations in Dutch neighborhoods. We also decided to create a database of pictures and have done a so called 'lost letter study' (Stanley Milgram) on the street. The lost letter study gives an indication of the social behavior of the residents. That idea came from ourselves. In such research you "accidentally" leave a letter with address and stamp somewhere on the street, and you check whether the letter afterwards has been done in the mailbox. In neighborhoods with lots of cohesion it is expected that this relatively frequently happens. We did this in twelve towns and cities in the Netherlands with four districts each. We have travelled to many cities before in the country to visit those neighborhoods. We also read preparatory literature on social cohesion and entrepreneurship for the entire research project. I did this project as an Undergraduate Research Project (URP), along with a fellow student, and supervised by a researcher. We have made an analysis of the collected data and written a research report about it.*

*I have learned above all the setting up and conducting of an investigation. In the beginning we thought: we are just going to do this. But if you're preparing it, you discovered, that a lot is involved. You can leave letters only once. Doing research I find fun, but not to do that for months and years. I myself am much more practical than the student with whom I worked. He was strong in theory and analysis; I'm strong in the execution and creative contribution. These differences worked particularly well in this project. URP gives a picture of how much freedom you can have or take in the honours program. If you want to do something and you're excited about, you see that you can do a lot more and you can make it your own project.*

### Did you do other projects?

Later in the second year. The biggest project I've done was also with (mostly) honours students. A classmate came from the island of Texel and was approached by the municipality. They asked whether students perhaps could make a vision and town plan. A project group of students was gathered to create a structure for the village of Oudeschild, a project of choice for students in town planning. This project was a 'tailored module' with a study load of 7½ EC, a freely convertible course within the programme. We wrote for the Department a proposal in response to the demand of the municipality of Texel. We have done this project with four honours students and another student. We were supervised by some teachers from the university; the municipality of Texel made suggested counseling available. We had the freedom to shape this project ourselves. It took the form of a studio as it was suggested in the programme on Town planning. There was no formal education, the elaboration was left to us. We had a real customer who had to be satisfied. We listened to what the inhabitants of the village wanted and to what they saw as the problem (a few weeks before a plan for another village was completely rejected by the inhabitants). We talked to different parties, such as Rijkswaterstaat (National Infrastructure). We have tried to bring people together with respect to the question: "How do you see the future of the village?" You have to take into account that these islanders are fairly self-willing people, who have their own opinion (rightly) about what should happen on their island. We have presented the vision and plan for the structure of Oudeschild to the inhabitants, the mayor and aldermen in the traditional village discussion. This presentation is depicted in a cartoon from the newspaper, the *Helderse Courant*, October 3, 2008 (Figure 7.3).



Figure 7.3: At the request of the municipality students designed a new village plan for Oudeschild (Noordhollands Dagblad - *Helderse Courant*, October 3, 2008, cartoon Frank Muntjewerf)

Notes to the cartoon: The students are pictured as toddlers. Over the shoulder the Mayor and Aldermen look at the plans being developed. In the background two men with briefcases and dark clouds above their heads walk away.

### Where did you learn the most from?

Working with the various parties gave the best learning experience I've had in my studies. This was

*important to us, especially if you want to be a professional town planner. In consultation with various parties you have to make one plan with sufficient support. Then to submit again the plan to external parties. That is what you do everywhere.*

#### **How was the cooperation within the team?**

*In the team we spoke regularly about the progress. Due to the fact that you're honours students, you work efficiently together. You're at least every two or three weeks together in the honours program, you know that you have confidence in each other. You have no doubt about free riders and the motivation is high, everyone goes for it. Everyone in the group had its own interests and strengths: cultural heritage, traffic and the like.*

#### **How was the progress of motivation and learning in the honours program?**

In a graph (Figure 7.4) Niels outlines the progress of his motivation and learning results throughout the honours programme includes peaks and valleys in a storyline. There are two peaks: the Undergraduate Research Project and the Texel project.

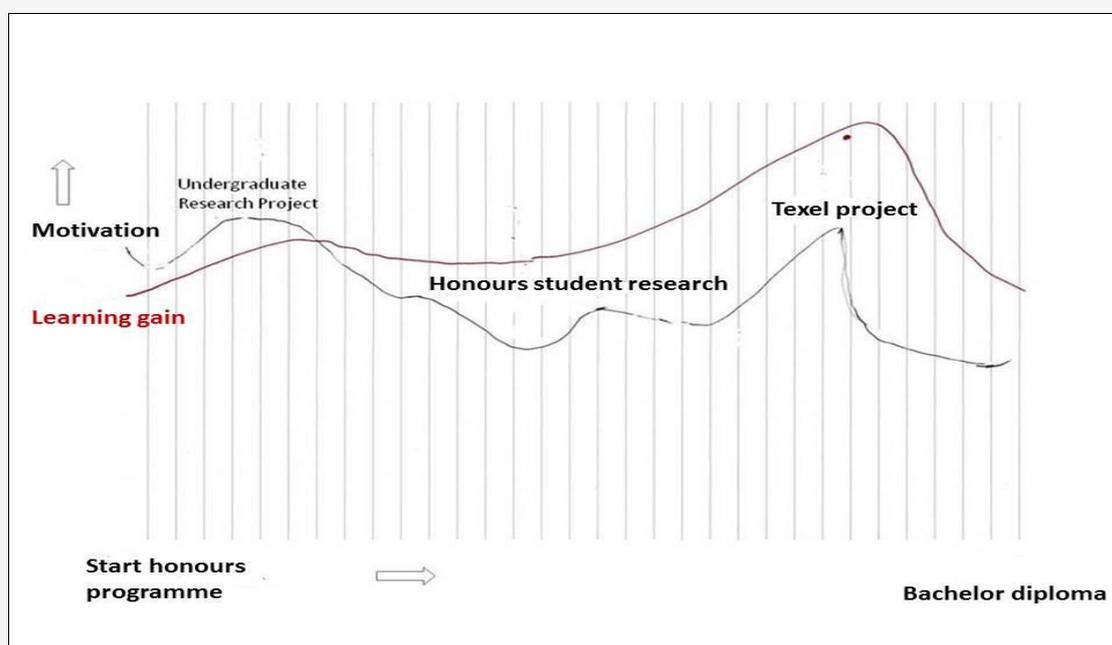


Figure 7.4: The progress of the motivation Niels (black line) in the honours programme and the progress of the learning results (red line) in the honours program

#### **Have you had dips in your motivation for the honours program?**

*A dip was in the honours student research. It was a compulsory subject. We did the honours version. We had to learn to do quantitative research. The problem was that it coincided with other time-consuming courses, so I was very busy, but I felt little enthusiasm for quantitative research. There was a delay in the research and I lost my motivation for it. Nevertheless, I finished it with a good mark.*

#### **Will you draw the learning results in red in the graph?**

*A huge peak was at Texel project, I've learned a lot from. Despite a dip I have never considered stopping the honours programme.*

#### **Can you further explain the progress of your motivation?**

*The graph shows a slightly declining trend for motivation during the honours programme. We started with twenty students, freshmen Human Geography but also with some second and third year students, and that was a close-knit group. You also worked with them in the regular program. In the*

*second and third honours year there were also students from other disciplines in the Department. An interdisciplinary group is interesting but it was at the expense of the strength of the group and the deepening of the level of content. Up to twenty students was a good size. Students from other studies came occasionally too, but destroying the bond (my motivation was reduced to a large increase in the group because of the success of the honours programme). In the final year some students came occasionally to the meetings and then you wondered who it was. The very small size and solidity of the group were of great added value.*

**Did you see the other honours students also in the regular programme?**

*Regularly. You know and see each other in the honours programme and therefore you do more together. When making assignments you know that the other has just a little bit more motivation than average, so you do also outside of the honours programme tasks together. Despite that I have fortunately never had the impression that other students saw us as a kind of "elite club". We had with other honours students fortnightly seminars of half a day a week with a variety of subjects to which everyone contributed. This was organized by the honours students. In the meetings the exchange of experiences every time was central. At the beginning of the year, a list of topics was made: what skills you want to develop? Often we combined it with an activity, for example an information day about Schiphol Airport and a debate on it. We invited guest speakers and gathered information by ourselves.*

## 8a. Inspiring and creating

Anne Hess and Pierre van Eijl

"Especially in the brainstorming sessions I had to create an opportunity for myself. In addition, I was also excited by the creativity of others." (Wilma Legendijk, honours student Windesheim).



Figure 8a.1: Characteristics of a creative environment (Innosupport, 2014)

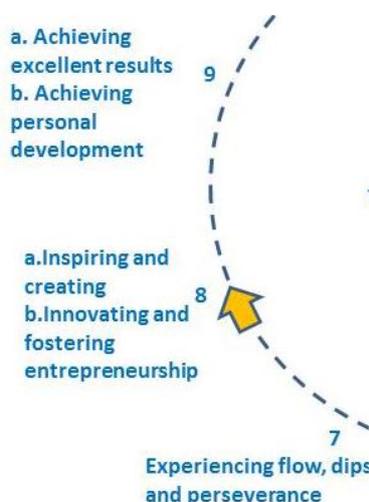


Figure 8a.2 Inspiring and creating

### **Key points**

- The challenge and space in an honours programme are an incentive for creativity.
- Addressing 'real' problems for a customer is stimulating and inspiring.
- Creativity is one of the main features of a leading professional. Besides creativity, above average commitment and above average abilities are needed for innovative professionals.
- Creative people often have a great curiosity and wide interest, and they are flexible in their thinking; but their characters can vary considerably and there is no overall trait.
- It is better to gradually move towards a new solution than waiting for a creative idea falling from the sky.
- You can help to achieve a creative environment by giving others the space and by encouraging them in their creativity. In an honours community they will be more inclined to give you also creative space.
- Keeping a new idea afloat requires personal strength.

## 8b. Innovating and fostering entrepreneurship

Milou van Dommelen, Vincent Gelink, Ninib Dibo and Pierre van Eijl

*"An example of a creative and innovative activity was the feedback system on our own research; we gave public presentations on the theme and the progress of our research. Part of the audience was selected as "experts" from outside. It was intended that their feedback would help us into new ways".*  
(Joseph Simon, ArtEZ)



Figure 8b.1: Innovation by a multidisciplinary team of students

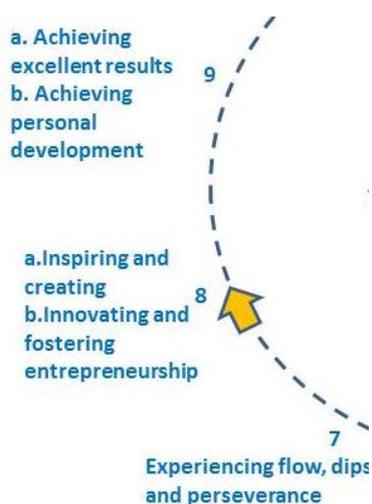


Figure 8b.2 Innovating and fostering entrepreneurship

### Key points

- An innovation is more than a new idea, it is also a concrete realization.
- Learning to develop a small innovation in an honours programme can be the start of a great

innovation later in the field.

- Individual action and initiative are essential to achieve something new.
- Entrepreneurship by yourself in your studies can be meaningful and even lead to a start-up.
- Important in entrepreneurship is opportunity recognition: recognizing opportunities and seizing opportunities.
- Studying in an honours programme can contribute to the development of entrepreneurial behaviour.

## 9a. Achieving excellent results

Jamila Schalken and Pierre van Eijl

*"In retrospect, I think I've made an excellent performance. But when I was working, it was just a challenge and really chasing my own passion. I think I could do this, because I've been busy with what really are my interests, without noticing it I did a lot of activities that have been theoretically transcending the bachelor's level."* (Nory Lansing, honours student HU)



Figure 9a.1: Qualities of an excellent professional (HU Utrecht)



Figure 9a.2 Achieving excellent results

### **Key points**

- Drawing up by yourself the criteria for the end result of a project or task, independence and personal focus on the final result will strengthen the outcomes.
- Talent development also includes the ability to estimate the value of the results of their own work without lapsing into self-overestimation or underestimation.
- Each student is unique and that means that the end results in an honours programme are diverse in content, form and level.
- Deadlines and quality (high expectations by the teacher) give pressure but also an incentive to go for quality.
- Meeting challenges, adopting a proactive attitude, cooperating and communicating across disciplines and borders are important in an honours programme; but they are also important for everyone in their studies and subsequent professional life.

## 9b. Achieving personal development

**Jamila Schalken, Albert Pilot, Pierre van Eijl and Milou van Dommelen**

*"I have the idea to have delivered an excellent performance, because it honours programme demands a lot from you in terms of personal development. This is excellent because many peers do not want or can do this. They are much more concerned with the step by step completing their studies, while other honours students, and I myself think a lot more about the future and also know better what I want later in my life. Honours students apply their academic career to this, most regular students do this to a much lesser degree."* (Floor Sijtsma, honours student Hanze).



Figure 9b.1: Facing a challenge gives personal development



Figure 9b.2 Achieving personal development

### Key points

- Many students experience personal development as a key output of their honours activities.
- Doing something that is of real interest for you and that has also value for others, is an incentive to develop yourself as a person.
- Personal development can be difficult if you have to see that your own behaviour and framing do not influence others well.
- Honours programme are inspiring examples for teaching 21st century skills.
- "Crossing borders" of disciplines, countries and cultures means that you take steps from your familiar way of doing things and that you open yourself to new ways. That can be the starting point of a new development.
- In an honours programme you can bring qualities in yourself to develop that you were not aware of that you had.
- Focusing on talent development is not only trying to achieve excellence, but also showing commitment to the organization in which you study and work and to the world around you.

## 10. Continuing talent development in the growth mindset

Pierre van Eijl and Albert Pilot

*"The honours programme has had great influence on my further study and work. I decided first searching for more adventures, instead of immediately going to work. This involves an eye care project The Optical Foundation, which I will do in Ghana for a minimum of six months. In collaboration with the University of Cape Coast, I supervise groups of students to elementary schools to screen children for eye diseases. The most important and probably the most difficult task is to make the project locally self-sufficient to ensure sustainability. I find this very interesting because you have also to understand the culture in Ghana before trying to achieve this."* (Lise Schampaert, honours student HU).

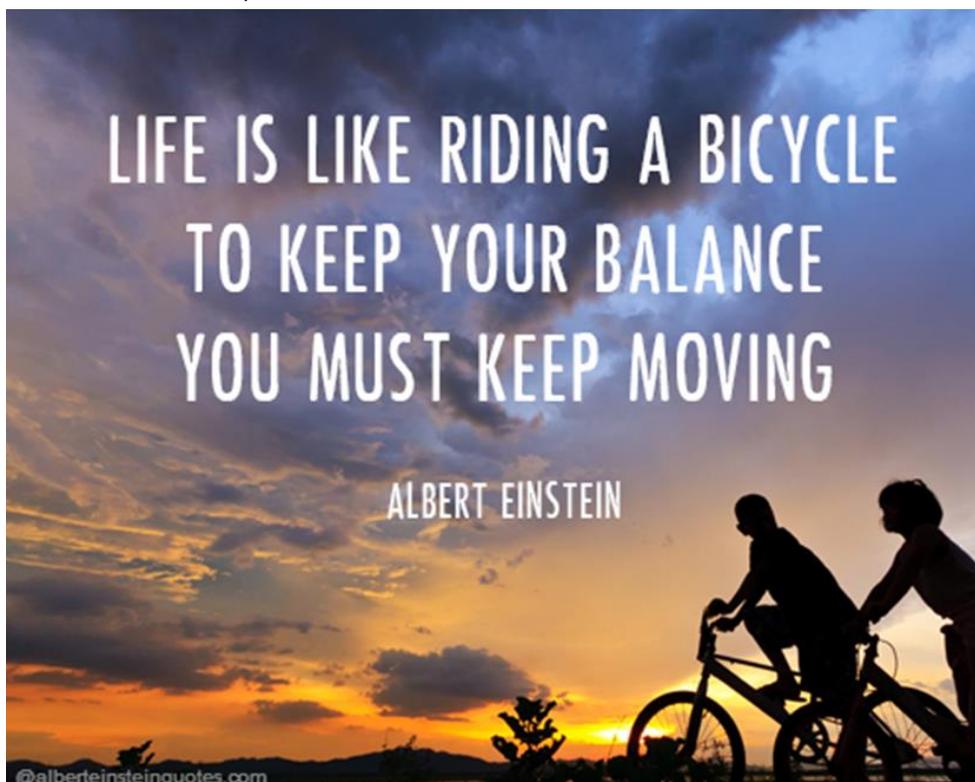


Figure 10.1: Continuous talent is like riding a bicycle: stay in balance and in motion



Figure 10.2 Continuing talent development in the growth mindset

### **Key points**

- Following an honours programme encourages you to further develop your talents after graduation.
- Challenges become more relevant to your talent development if they are inspiring in your perception and you are experiencing these as meaningful.
- The will to proceed with talent development points to a growth mindset, including the ability to collect mistakes, learn from them and develop yourself with tenacity.
- Development of a growth mindset can be about challenges in work and study, but also on how you view yourself and others. Overcoming your insecurities is also part of the development of a growth mindset.
- You can exercise your brains like your muscles, but then with appealing and appropriate challenges. Step by step they will develop your brains.

## 11. Talent development for everyone

### Pierre van Eijl and Albert Pilot

*"Make a good start and do not let yourself down. Put your own vision on the table. One thing to reach annually. Find the relevance, that gives you energy. Go working in a team; That is essential, you can use your own strength and lean on the strength of others. I learn from other students."*

(Pieter Jan Visser, honours student HvA).



Figure 11.1: Nuna8 solar vehicle invented by the student team from TU Delft: the NUON Solar Team

### Tips for Teachers

In the interviews, the students also gave tips for their teachers, about what may be important for them in teaching with a focus on talent development. Here are the main suggestions:

1. Create challenging situations and assignments for students who experience these from their perspective as challenging. Relevance, authenticity and topicality besides feasibility are very important.
2. Give students a large degree of freedom but pose deadlines and use high criteria for quality, for example for (intermediate) products.
- 3 Students appreciate very much the individual coaching in their studies by a teacher who does not prescribe, but enables them to make progress.
4. Teachers who form a community with each other (and their students) can have much benefit of it.
5. By making an educational framework or scenario in advance, you can prepare yourself well for students who come up with new ideas and initiatives.
6. Be alert to students who disappear from sight, they may have ended up in a dip and drop out. A conversation can then give the students the impetus to move forward again.
7. Select students for the honours programme on perseverance, motivation and potential for growth, because those aspects are important for being able to follow a tough programme aimed at

developing talent.

8. Encourage students to discuss issues and problems among themselves. Together, they have more than everyone for himself.
9. Discuss a talent pathway with students who do not function properly.
10. Notice how you also promoted itself by the enthusiasm that radiate students.
11. Set the bar high but keep everyone as much as possible 'inboard'.
12. Perhaps most importantly, talk with your students beforehand, so you better know your target audience!

The latter also helps if you are going to follow a course on 'honours Teaching ', you will get a better picture of a programme aimed at developing talent and how you can teach it. Conversations with experienced honours teachers can be very valuable.

### **Trade-off from honours to regular programme**

Students can in regular programmes, often unnoticed, experience something of the incentives for talent development as in honours programmes. The honours programmes can function as a testing ground for educational innovations in mainstream education (Wolfensberger, Van Eijl & Pilot, 2012). Research (Allen et al, 2015) shows that the trade-off of honours programmes in the mainstream education takes place in the form of parts of programmes or pedagogical innovations . Because honours programmes are more flexible than regular programmes desired changes can be tested first in honours programmes: for example, to strengthen the relationships with the work field or the connections between teaching and research.

Honours students can provide a kind of snowball effect of excellence: For example when honours students are divided consciously to work in mainstream programmes to encourage fellow students by their knowledge and active attitude. The teachers of honours programmes often also act as ambassadors for education innovation. However the condition is that these teachers remain active in both honours and regular programmes. For the impact of honours programmes in the regular programmes, the applicability of the honours approaches in mainstream programmes with larger student numbers per teacher ( "up-scaling") and for the other characteristics and types of students ('matching') is important. Also the accreditation and visitation protocols often have in regular programmes a greater role than in the honours programmes.

### **Universal experience in talent**

The stories of honours students about their honours programme are exciting, much can be learned from it. These "heroes" tell their own personal experiences in detail. The circle of talent development, the illustrative experiences and tips, all are extracted from these interviews and can bring others on ideas. This can be useful in an honours programme but also in a different route of (extra) talent development. Each student will thereby have to make his or her own choices, because the talent development of every student is unique. Yet general aspects are also visible in that process. They emerge in interview quotes below.

Central to recognize and to seize your opportunities are:

*"Don't let yourself down and go for your dreams."*

*"Do not be scared. If you think you want to do something, just do it and then you will notice how far you can go."*

When you, as a student, genuinely decide to go for it' and accept a challenge that appeals to you,

you will not only develop professionally but also get an impetus for the development of your personal qualities. Almost all honours students mention some form of personal development in their honours programme:

*"It's about more than just 'challenge', it is also about your development as a person."*

Even if you 'go for it', the process of talent development has its ups and downs. The identification of a dip and getting out of a dip is a part of this process.

*"Persevere and 'go for it'! You can resist the pain."*

A student who dropped out, thinking in retrospect, said: *"Maybe I should have done it anyway, I should not have given up so quickly."*

Talent development takes place when working on challenges with a great degree of freedom.

Complex challenges require a deepening in content and background of the project:

*"Go for the challenge. Surprise yourself and wonder about anything other than what you're used to; absorb it and let it settle down, then the real learning starts!"*

If the challenge that you accept means that you will work with a multidisciplinary group, you get the problem of bridging the differences between disciplines ("crossing borders"). However difficult it may seem, honours students mention to be very excited about it and say that they have come to unique solutions to problems with multidisciplinary groups. A basic change in attitude is also noticeable: they got an appreciation for what others contributed from their discipline:

*"The genuine interest in each other's views was refreshing. I have made many new friends in the honours programme and contacts gained outside the honours programme."*

*"I became more aware of views of other students in the programme. In my regular programme my fellow students often agree with me. In the honours programme that was not the case, making that you reflect more on your own beliefs and why you have these beliefs. "*

The talent development is particularly evident in larger and longer projects of students. In the interviews, students put a lot of emphasis on larger projects where a community of students and teachers are working on. That community and the culture associated with it, these students find essential to their honours experiences. Cooperation, communication and emotional support are crucial in their experience:

*"You should do it because you want it, because you're interested. Most things you dream about need time and energy to develop and to flourish. Do not be stopped by thoughts such as, "What if... But ..." and so on, but work step by step towards your goal. Not only to the final destination, but also enjoying the path to the destination is important on your journey."*

### **21st century skills**

Accepting actual, relevant and complex challenges, cooperation with motivated fellow students and a balanced coaching by teachers seem to be a good framework for the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Honours students show in their attitude and performance what 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are and how to acquire these skills. Honours programmes can be considered as a test bed for this educational innovation.

*"Enjoy your time in the honours programme, because it is soon gone by"*

## References

Allen, J., Belfi, B., van der Velden, R.K.W., Jongbloed, B., Kolster, R., Westerheijden, D., van Broekhoven, K., Leest, B., & Wolbers, M.H.J. (2015). Het beste uit studenten. Onderzoek naar de werking van het Sirius Programma om excellentie in het hoger onderwijs te bevorderen. [The best of students. Research on the effect of the Sirius Programme to foster excellence in Dutch higher education]. Nijmegen: ITS/ROA/CHEPS. 185 p.

Campbell, J. (1949). *The hero with a thousand faces*. 1st edition, Bollingen Foundation, 1949. 2nd edition, Princeton University Press. 3rd edition, New World Library, 2008.

Coppoolse, R., Wolfensberger, M.V.C., Eijl, P.J. van, Hermsen, L., Berge, J. ten & Kinkhorst, G. (2013). Honours teaching. In: R. Coppoolse, P.J. van Eijl & A. Pilot (Red.), *Hoogvliegers, ontwikkeling van professionele excellentie*. [Highflyers, Development towards Professional Excellence] Rotterdam: Rotterdam University Press, p. 127 - 146. Synopsis in English at:

[https://www.ris.uu.nl/admin/editor/dk/atira/pure/api/shared/model/base\\_uk/researchoutput/editor/contributiontoconferenceeditor.xhtml?id=21199699](https://www.ris.uu.nl/admin/editor/dk/atira/pure/api/shared/model/base_uk/researchoutput/editor/contributiontoconferenceeditor.xhtml?id=21199699)

Coppoolse, R. & Vroegindeweyj, D. (2010). De niveaumeter. In: R. Coppoolse & D. Vroegindeweyj, *75 modellen van het onderwijs*. Noordhoff Uitgevers, Groningen/Houten, p. 145.

Innosupport (2014). How to enhance creativity using innovative and advanced level ICT tools? Retrieved February 10, 2016:

[http://www.innosupport.net/index.php?id=6038&tx\\_mmforum\\_pi1\[action\]=list\\_post&tx\\_mmforum\\_pi1\[tid\]=4104](http://www.innosupport.net/index.php?id=6038&tx_mmforum_pi1[action]=list_post&tx_mmforum_pi1[tid]=4104)

Peeters, T. (2014). Teaching fellow Ton Peeters bereidt studenten voor op onvoorspelbare arbeidsmarkt (interview). *DUB (Digitaal Universiteitsblad Universiteit Utrecht)* 24 oktober 2014. See: <http://www.dub.uu.nl/artikel/achtergrond/teaching-fellow-ton-peeters-bereidt-studenten-voor-op-onvoorspelbare.html>

Wolfensberger, M.V.C., Eijl, P.J. van, & Pilot, A. (2012). Laboratories for Educational Innovation: Honors Programs in the Netherlands. *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* 13, 2, 149-170

*Illustration credits:* see the book: Eijl, P.J. van, & Pilot, A. (2016) *The Honours Experience, talentontwikkeling door de ogen van de honours student*, Rotterdam: Hogeschool Rotterdam Uitgeverij