



JOURNAL OF THE EUROPEAN HONORS COUNCIL

Note

Introduction: Perspectives and insights on talent development and honors education

Maarten Hogenstijn

Coordinating Editor JEHC; European Honors Council Secretary; Hanze University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands

Correspondence: journal@honorscouncil.eu

Published: 20 December 2019

--

The Editorial Board is honored to present a new issue of the *Journal of the European Honors Council (JEHC)*. JEHC aims to share knowledge and good practices regarding honors programs and talent development programs in higher education.

In this issue, we present a wide variety of perspectives. The contributors discuss practices in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States, including the perspectives of students, teaching assistants, teacher education students, program coordinators, and researchers. A new honors program in Austria is introduced, and a benchmark contribution discusses honors programs in the arts. To top it off, we offer a paper which gives insight into the history of this journal, including a list of lessons learned in setting up the journal.

1. Student perspectives

The first two notes in this issue discuss the perspective of students.

In the note "From 'green goals' to a broad understanding of sustainability: Honors students change the perspective of a university," Erik de Kruijff explains how an interdisciplinary group of honors students made an impact on the sustainability policy of a university in the Netherlands. De Kruijff takes the reader along in the endeavors of the group, reflecting on process and progress in their honors program.

Honors students have a different role in the next note, "The role of honors teaching assistants as community builders." Meghan Grassel, Hanna Holmquist, and Rebecca C. Bott-Knutson from South Dakota State University (USA) assess the value of having undergraduate teaching assistants mentor small groups of students in first-year Honors Orientation classes.

They conclude that teaching assistants have an important role in making connections between first-year students and the honors college.

In his paper “Education for the Gifted and Talented: Student teachers reflecting about autonomy, control, and pedagogical diagnostics in a self-designed workshop program for gifted schoolchildren,” David Rott from the University of Muenster (Germany) combines perspectives of teachers and students. He discusses a program in which university students in teacher education design a program in which they act as teachers for gifted school children, which in turn serves as a kind of honors program for these teacher education students themselves. This is a potential win-win situation, and Rott analyses the results for the students, focusing on their experience of competence.

2. Program perspectives

Two more notes provide new insights on the level of honors programs.

First, Ulrich Schmid from TU Wien (Austria) explains the “Design and Implementation of the Bachelor with Honors Program at TU Wien.” In a short period of time, Schmid and colleagues built a new Bachelor with Honors (BHons) program at the Faculty of Informatics at his university. The program is specifically oriented towards scientific research to motivate students to continue their education and complete a Ph.D.

In the note “Excellence in Arts Education: A Benchmark Research,” Mariska Versantvoort, who was at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands at the time of doing the research, discusses honors program in relation to arts education. This is a topic of debate, as arts education specializes in talent development, and students are selected at the gate on their visual skills and creative capacity. What should honors education in the arts then look like? Versantvoort reports on a benchmark research in educational institutions in the Netherlands and the USA. Interestingly, she observes that the descriptors that art academies and institutes for performing arts use to promote their honours programs do not present anything out of line with the general theory on the subject.

3. Creating this journal

Finally, we present a paper on this journal itself: “Lessons learned in setting up an open access journal: the case of JEHC.” The development of *JEHC* is described in four phases: lead-up to the first idea (2015-2016), from first idea to first issue (2016-2017), professionalization (2017-2018), and increasing impact (2018-). Ten lessons learnt are detailed, leading to a main piece of advice to others wishing to start an open access journal: inform yourself well before you start, but do not be afraid to learn along the way.

While this paper does not discuss research on honors education or talent development, we hope it provides valuable insights and perspectives on publication methods for our readers. An earlier version of this paper has been published in preprint through EdArxiv, and comments were taken into account when finalizing the paper.

4. Final remarks

In 2020, *JEHC* will continue to publish contributions on research into honors and talent development in higher education. The Editorial Board invites you to contribute to the next

issue(s) of the journal by sending in your papers and notes. All information on contributing can be found on the website www.jehc.eu.

Acknowledgements

The Editorial Board would like to thank Saffyre Falkenberg at Texas Christian University (USA) for copyediting and Hanze University of Applied Sciences Groningen (the Netherlands) for supporting the hosting of the Journal.