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Editorial note

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Introduction

This regular issue (9-1) of the *Journal of the European Honors Council: Talent and Transdisciplinarity in Education* is the result of an open call for submissions; consequently, the contributions cover a variety of themes. Two of the articles serve as spin-offs from the Oslo honours conference held in October/November 2025—an event we covered extensively in issue 8-1. These two pieces highlight valuable elements that were addressed during the conference. The other articles discuss various topics related to honours and educational development, focusing on talent and exploring the possibilities and aspects of effective transdisciplinary education.

The contributions in the current issue

Interdisciplinary Education: The Dynamic of Societal Challenges, Knowledge Traditions and Student Interests – *Berit Karseth*.

One perspective comes from Oslo, Norway. In her text, originally a keynote for the Honours Conference 2025 Berit Karseth (Vice-Rector for Education, University of Oslo) addresses the value of honours education for students. A wave of budget cuts is currently sweeping through educational institutions in various European countries, and policymakers would do well to take this piece to heart: students of this type are to be found in every study program. Naturally, her insights and findings translate well to an international context.

Comparing two dialogue methods for appreciating differences and similarities in groups and in honours education - *Machiel Keestra, Michael O'Rourke*.

On the other hand, the second spin-off from the hours conference in Oslo, represents a strong collaboration between two colleagues who each developed a collaborative methodology based on the use of dialogue—albeit from very different perspectives and with distinct approaches. Both approaches are highly interesting and applicable in any classroom. Whether viewed as a working method or as a way to discuss a sensitive topic—such as Keti Koti, the annual commemoration in the Netherlands (on July 1st) of the abolition of slavery in Suriname and the former Netherlands Antilles—the act of listening, and listening truly well, has been formalized into a methodology.

Towards a New Honors Manifesto: Re-evaluating values, attitudes, and themes in Dutch higher education - *Ron Weerheijm, Marike Lammers et al*.

Then there is an article that explores the (Honours) Manifesto 2026 in greater depth. This manifesto is an adaptation of the document created in the Netherlands in 2014—at the

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conclusion of a subsidy period—to serve as a final repository of knowledge. Over the intervening ten years, a wealth of additional knowledge has been gained, and a great deal of experience has been shared. During this same period, honours education has also taken root within secondary vocational education (MBO) in the form of excellence programs. Institutions from the university sector, higher professional education, and secondary vocational education have all contributed to this Manifesto 2026, drawing upon their respective backgrounds and experiences. The article provides a further, in-depth examination of this manifesto.

Envisioning Honors Education as Complex Problem-Solving: A Human-Centered Design Approach for Global Challenges - *Patrick Akos, Jordan King, Linda Frost*.
From the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (USA) comes a contribution describing how an honours program can serve as a catalyst for addressing human-centered societal issues. It outlines how such program are designed, why this is significant, and the key learning experiences students gain from them. External partners are also involved—effectively becoming an integral part of the program—thereby creating a learning environment that fosters development for all parties. Students demonstrate a greater level of engagement with these issues, which in turn enables them to act more effectively.

Opportunities in Disguise - *Noah Roerig, Ethan L. Snow, Hanna Holmquist*.
From the United States, South Dakota State University offers a compelling argument for paying greater attention to the role of chance in honours education. While this may seem like a contradiction, the article actually advocates for "nudging" chance—creating conditions that can evolve into valuable learning opportunities. To facilitate this, one needs an understanding of the theory of "planned happenstance," which outlines five specific skills that enable students to engage with and navigate unexpected situations. A key rationale for incorporating this "planned happenstance" into education is the simple fact that real life is frequently shaped by a variety of unplanned events—making it all the more important to be well-prepared.

Perspective taking within honors education at the Hanze (University of Applied Sciences) - *Yvonne Zijlstra, Annegien Langeloo, Elanor Kamans, Hans Conijn*.
The article from Hanze University of Applied Sciences explores when the incorporation of different perspectives into education can contribute to a student's development. What role does empathy—stepping into another person's mindset, recognizing their emotions, and understanding their motivations—play in a student's personal growth? Based on focus group research, the article identifies four approaches through which this shift in perspective can be meaningfully facilitated. It examines these four methods and notes that they can be applied not only in honours programs but also within mainstream education.

Acknowledgement
The Journal's editorial board would like to thank all the authors for their contributions, as well as our critical reviewers, who—together with the authors—help us maintain the high quality of our articles. The published pieces serve as excellent examples of how thinking about honours education creates space for alternative approaches and innovative educational design, while also enabling us to address societal issues through our teaching. It is precisely this combination that makes honours education so compelling and instructive: in the process of teaching, we explore new opportunities and possibilities, allowing us to continuously improve our educational practice.