



Bilingual A-level education for the gifted

Start

In 2010, College Den Hulster, Venlo, Netherlands, started a special bilingual stream for gifted and highly talented children from the age of 11/12 to 18. We call it The Da Vinci Class, after Leonardo Da Vinci, who was also highly gifted and versatile. The concept centres on the bilingual stream, which is done in 26 instead of 32 lessons a week. The six remaining hours result in Da Vinci Day, when students can take up extra study and follow other educational programmes like Technasium and Sports Class. They also get a chance to exploit their talents in other fields than the cognitive like music, sports and art. Specially trained tutors make sure students keep up with the programme and preserve the right balance and quality in their activities.

Bilingual Stream

In the bilingual stream students get 50% of their lessons in English, on average, for six years. This extra challenge brings them to the International Bachalaureate (IB) language A higher level, the highest international language qualification. Da Vinci Class students take part in all the extra-curricular activities like international exchanges, study trips to Cambridge and

Dublin, English theatre performances etcetera.

Da Vinci Day

The six remaining lessons are given on Da Vinci Day, which is filled with activities that match the students' individual needs and interests:

1. The tutor has the opportunity to talk to the student about every aspect concerning study, well-being, obstacles and opportunities.
2. Special extra programme; the student can study extra subjects, do remedial work, either individually or in groups, for example: film, chemistry, history, glee club, karate, Spanish, learning strategies. Supervised autonomous study is the norm on this day.
3. Projects: some Da Vinci Days will be spent on joint projects which may involve field work and community service.





The Da Vinci Class

Tutors

Four tutors will guide about six students each to complement the standard guidance that students get from their teachers and mentor. Their task focuses on the following aspects:

1. Personal attention, with weekly quality time to talk about anything concerning the student's learning and well-being and inevitable bonding as a result
2. Assessment: together with the tutor, the students find out about their abilities, opportunities and limitations
3. Control: the tutor makes sure the student spends his time well and ensures balance in the activities
4. Structure: the tutor helps and instructs his pupil on study strategies and the organization of his available time with the use of planners
5. Network: the tutor helps the student in the contacts with teachers, other schools, universities and companies
6. Portfolio: through a log and a portfolio the student and tutor keep track of all achievements and progress
7. Continuity: tutor and student together make sure that motivation for and fun in the programme are restored, should this become a problem
8. Parents: the tutor has an open communication with the parents, who consider the tutor a friend who understands their child almost as well as they do.

Future developments

The Da Vinci Class programme suggests a fast lane career in the bilingual stream, which means that in the last three years extra study opportunities must be created in cooperation with universities, professional colleges and companies. The Da Vinci Class student remains a pupil of College Den Hulster for about six years and only leaves school with an A-level VWO diploma and the IB language A certificate.

Information

For extra information or questions, contact Chris de Haan, vice principal of the bilingual stream. E: haa@denhulster.nl T: 0031-6-46646720

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