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Newsletter Industrial Design

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IDzine



Technasium

For the second year in a row, ID acted as a client for the Technasium, an education stream offered by a number of secondary schools in the Netherlands.

The Technasium is an education stream offered by a number of secondary schools in the Netherlands. Its aim is to provide a challenging and motivating education to VWO and HAVO pupils who are interested in science and technology. Besides following regular classes, Technasium pupils form teams to work on research and design projects. External parties from various branches of society, such as industry, health care, education and agriculture, act as clients, providing the pupils with real-life issues to work on.



Future students

For the second year in a row, ID acted as a client for the Technasium. Assistant professor Geert Langereis and student assistant Karin Niemantsverdriet supervised six teams at two Technasium schools, one in Zierikzee (Zeeland) and one in Boxtel (Noord-Brabant). Langereis: *'Our principal purpose of getting involved in the Technasium is to make potential future students enthusiastic for Industrial Design. These pupils are smart and highly motivated. In addition, education at the Technasium and at ID is similar: students work in multidisciplinary teams for external clients, and try to design technological solutions for issues in society.'*

3 month projects

The six teams of three pupils completed their projects in about three months. Langereis: *'At the kick-off meeting in February, the teams visited our department. Karin and I visited the schools in April to check on the progress and answer questions. On the first of June the groups presented their results.'*

Water taps

Langereis: *'We gave the Technasium teams two assignments that we also give our students. The first assignment was to design an intelligent product that helps reduce aggression and criminality. A group in Zierikzee who took on this assignment applied the question to a local issue: Young people in Zierikzee often go out to the nearby, touristy town of Renesse, which has a busy night life. The team's research showed first of all that the frequent occurrences of aggression and acute health problems in Renesse's night life are caused by binge drinking. Second, they found out that these problems can be significantly reduced by drinking water between alcoholic beverages. As a solution the team designed water taps that can be placed in the street close to bars.'*

Autism

Langereis: *'The second assignment was to design an intelligent product that facilitates communication for persons with communicative disabilities such as autism. After researching the issue, one of the teams concluded that the problem lies only partly with the autistic persons themselves. Communication problems with autistic persons often arise because the general public is insufficiently aware of autism. So instead of designing a communication device for autistic persons, the team designed an app for smartphones which increases awareness of autism.'*

High level

Langereis: *'The level of the work done by the teams was remarkably high. When presented with their assignments, the pupils were capable of taking a step back, reformulating the essence of the problem and produce some out-of-the-box solutions. They worked very independently and took initiatives to talk to experts, such as bouncers working in bars and people at autism centres.'* In conclusion, Langereis describes his experience as very positive. *'Even with a limited effort, one comes into contact with enthusiastic pupils who create really surprising designs. It is striking how teams working on the same assignment come up with very different solutions. ID will certainly continue cooperation with the Technasium and there is a good chance that I will be involved again next year.'*

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