

# LOBBYING FOR CLASSICS

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What the pro's can teach you  
a casestudy

Vereniging Classici Nederland



January 2016:

ons onderwijs  
2032

future-proof education  
primary & secondary school (4-18)  
knowledge, skills & personal formation

Vereniging Classici Nederland



# Core curriculum for all children: 80% 20% school-specific



**'Personally, I would not mind at all if Greek disappeared from the curriculum'**



# Classics in the Netherlands:

- ± 200.000 final exam candidates (4, 5 or 6th form)
- 40.000 6th form finalists
- 10.000 6th form with classics (25% Greek, 75% Latin)
- 4.500 in independent gymnasia (40 schools)
- 5.500 in other schools

**'Personally, I would not mind at all if  
Greek disappeared from the curriculum'**

**'Gymnasia are not about classics, but  
about excellence'**



**Conference september 2016:  
president 'ons onderwijs 2032'  
Theo Douma warns us:  
get into action now!**



# What would YOU do?



# 1. Get in the pro's : communication agency



Schinkelshoek & Verhoog

Thuis in Den Haag

Vereniging Classici Nederland



## 2. Define your goals: make a SWOT & write a briefing!



## 2. SWOT-outcome:

- 21st century proof
- language and culture (text is culture!) must be integrated
- classics fits in the realms of: citizenship, modern languages, (dutch) literature, arts&culture, people & society, personal formation

**Result:**  
Kernboodschap / Core message  
**Classics unite modern society**



- **Classical languages and culture form and unite.** They do this through powerful stories, strong images and fundamental questions. Classics connects the earlier world with today's, connects your own world with that of the other. It opens your eyes to what you share with each other, in the society of now. It equips you for your role in the society of tomorrow. Classics prepares you for the life that lies before you.
- **Language**  
**Language is the key to understanding;** only by accurately engaging with what someone actually says can you truly understand them. If you understand the language you can also make clear what you want to put into words. If you understand each other you can connect with each other, live alongside each other. Classics teaches you to understand language and so to make better use of your own language.
- **Language and Culture**  
Language and culture go hand in hand. You begin to understand each other by speaking the same language. But you only truly understand each other by becoming involved in each other's culture and so by putting each other's words into their true context. Classics makes you a master of this. You explore what your own culture is and where it has come from. You learn to see connections and so develop yourself in language and culture.
- **Artes liberales**  
The academic subject of Classical languages and culture has several different disciplines at its core. The aims of Classics are not only directed to language but also to literature, philosophy, art and architecture, history. As a result the subject transcends itself. Classics is the living example of the ideal of artes liberales or liberal arts and sciences.
- **Classics makes you creative.** It stimulates you to work together and to develop your capacity for problem-solving. It teaches you to analyse and research in depth. You learn to think critically and so to discriminate between truth and fiction. To begin with it is complicated but once you are fully engaged it challenges you more than anything. You develop yourself to the top of your abilities. And there you are not on your own. You work with devoted teachers who themselves have made a conscious choice for Classics. Their passion feeds your own enthusiasm

- **Classics takes you not only on a journey through time, but also to new worlds.** It opens up unexpected vistas. It enriches your imagination. The Greek and Latin languages give you an entry to ancient culture. You make contact with ideas, stories and characters from the Greek and Roman world. Classics connects you to your own past: where have we come from and how have we become what we are?
- **Shared past, common future**  
Classics also gives (young) people an entry to the present and past of the other. The world of Classics stretches from the Ganges, Danube and Rhine to as far as Scotland and the Sahara. The Netherlands has many (minority) ethnic groups. They do not always realise that they too often have a shared background and so on this basis they can build towards a common future. Classics opens your eyes to this.
- **Empathy**  
Classical languages and culture offer you attractive examples to think about the big questions with. What is normal for you comes, through Classics, up against what is strange for you. So you learn to reflect on this and to ask yourself challenging questions. Through this you can have greater empathy with the circumstances and feelings of others. In this way Classics contributes to a formation of who you are.
- **Democratic constitution**  
Classics gives you an entry into the source which inspired our democratic constitution and to the values which are the basis for our society. It gives a direction to your development towards becoming a full citizen. Through this as well, Classics has its place at the heart of education and political life.
- **Classics inspire**  
Your self-development in relation to others leads to prosperity and well-being. Therefore Classical languages and culture are of priceless worth to the people who make up the Netherlands.

**Core message covers all the areas of the new curriculum!**

**Strategy:**  
**1. Core message shows relevance**  
**Result:**  
**new élan for classics**

**Ask not what your country can do for classics,  
but what classics can do for your country!**

# Step 1: new élan: mobilize followers

- Do not overestimate knowledge
- Repeat yourself endlessly (frappez toujours!)
- Powerful stories & strong images for the amateurs
- Create partners! Unite!
- Do not use arguments that appeal to classicists: sell your story

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# Step 1: new élan: mobilize teachers

- Ambassadors
- Help teachers to sell the story
- Informatie- en inspiratiepakket
- <https://klassieken.nu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/informatiepakket-VCN.pdf>
- Repeat yourself endlessly (frappez toujours!)
- Do not overestimate interest

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# Strategy

## 2: relevance and followers create a voice

### Result: politicians listen

- 'issues of the day'
- Politicians are worried about votes
- Politicians know little about classics (core message)
- Politicians want to know about your followers



# Step 2: get politicians on your side if you can't beat them, be constructive!

- Approach them at the right time (agenda's)
- Repeat yourself endlessly (frappez toujours!)
- Learn off your oneliners by heart
- Politicians have many opponents: be a 'friend'
- Ask anything you like to know!
- Do not forget to keep them informed



# Where are we now?

- schoolcurriculum is being rewritten (curriculum.nu)
- classics did not get in on the process, but ...
  1. ministry promised that gymnasium & classics would remain
  2. ministry allows VCN to (re-)write our own curriculum
  3. ministry has hinted at priority-treatment
    - and funded us with € 25.000
  4. ministry insists on support (followers) and surveys
- Deadline: November 1, 2019

# Biggest threat?

teachers' disinterest ...

# Largest opportunity?

21st century proof curriculum