

News Report

A short review of the Diploma Ceremony MSc Pedagogical Sciences: Communication and Deafblindness

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University of Groningen Passes Another Seven Graduates with Merit

In 2017, the University of Groningen completed its 11th study programme in "Communication and Deafblindness". On 4th October seven graduates completed their studies with the traditional Diploma Ceremony. Wolfgang Hug, a graduate from the Stiftung st. Franziskus Heiligenbronn (Germany) was one of them and he outlines his impressions of the Graduation Day:

October 4th 2017 was the day all graduates came to present their individual Master's Thesis. They also had to answer questions from their lecturers and comment on statements from members of the audience. Despite my own tension, I was curious to see what developments each of my peers individually had gone through in the previous few months and what results had been achieved. The audience consisted of our lecturers, students from this years course and their families and friends, as well as the students who had enrolled on this years "Communication and Deafblindness" study program.

The Graduation Day took place at Van Swinderen Huys in the Glazen Zaal in Oude Boteringestraat 19 in Groningen, where coffee and tea was served to begin with. The joy of reunion amongst us students and the lecturers was overwhelming. It felt like being in a very familiar setting, seeing everyone again. After a warm welcome from Prof. Dr. Marleen Janssen, we launched into the graduates' presentations. These were all the students who passed and their related theses:

- Julia Usselman: It's about having a voice! How can caregivers of persons with deafblindness master the concept of agency?
- Caroline Lindström: Contributing to a bodily/tactile language by transforming cultural customs.
- Lucia Oostra Urrea: Positive and negative factors on peer interaction for children with deafblindness.
- Leendert van Dam: A place to be - Research to the quality of life of persons with deafblindness living in institutes for mentally retarded persons.
- Marianne Rorije: My mind knows: we all have different minds.

- Manon Steltenpool: Declare you and me - A study about the influence of different professional roles on declarative communication.
- Wolfgang Hug: „I have a dream“- Integrating wishes and passions of adults with deafblindness into the consultation process.

The breadth of the different studies showed just how diverse scientific work can be and how many topics possible in the field of deafblindness.

The pass rate was 100% - you could sense the relief each of the students had felt after their intense, work-intensive and exciting year's journey.

Before the day had drawn to a close, each supervisor gave a speech in honour of their students. They referenced a personal and individual acknowledgement of each student, their topic and the work they had submitted, their process, journey and results. For me, this moment was truly emotional where the hard work and all the effort put in paid off and sacrifices had become negligible. Prof. Dr Marleen Janssen then finally handed out the diplomas.

It was time to celebrate and everyone was invited by the University of Groningen to an informal reception at the 'Louix XV' where drinks and finger food were served. This is where this special year and an even more impressive day had drawn to a close.

I summarize my impressions as:

Deafblindness: a special disability.

Communication and Deafblindness: an outstanding programme.

Graduation Day and Diploma Ceremony: a unique day.

Thanks to all.

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