



## Report on the Master Deafblindness

September 2021 four Graduates of the Master Deafblindness at the University of Groningen proudly presented their master projects in an online graduation ceremony, which was attended by professionals from all over the world. Dimitra Nellopoulou from Greece presented a survey on the available services and awareness of Congenital Deafblindness in Greece. Chiara Somers then presented her study about the effects of a training for a teacher in enhancing the bodily-tactile cognition on the tactile working memory of a child with congenital deafblindness. Then Laura Cowan from Scotland presented her a case study of a deafblind sailor's journey into racing, and finally Annelies Braad gave a presentation about the observation of non-linguistic and linguistic features in the communication of a child with congenital deafblindness. The presentations were quite diverse and clearly showed the commitment of the students to their individual projects.

The presentations were also visited by the six new students who just started the masterprogram. Just prior to their start the team of lecturers had hoped to meet the students in the Netherlands. Instead, it was needed to prepare online lectures due to the COVID pandemic situation, like in the academic year 2020-2021. Fortunately, the lecturers were prepared and met very motivated students in the online classroom. The students have now started to develop their research proposals and as every year, the topics they chose for their own research projects are quite diverse. This reflects the variation in the backgrounds and interests of the students, who come from Cyprus, Greece, Norway, Indonesia and the Netherlands. Topics students have chosen are for example: cultural differences in interacting with people with deafblindness, Yoga for people with Usher syndrome, quantitative and qualitative analysis of the effects of a training for communication partners, the meaning of repetitive behaviors and the experiences of teachers in special needs education teaching learners with deafblindness.

We are very much looking forward to the moment these studies are published as a master thesis. Perhaps they will also be published someday in the Journal of Deafblind Studies on

Communication. Hopefully, we can also hear and see the students face-to-face, when they present their studies in next year's graduation ceremony. We cross our fingers, but we also know now that they will manage and definitely will become the next generation of academic professionals specialized in the education of people with deafblindness. We are already proud of them.

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