



Master Track Deafblindness

Marja Cantell, PhD
Programme Coordinator
Thesis supervisor
Faculty

Erika Prenger, PhD
Internship Coordinator
DB Alumni 😊



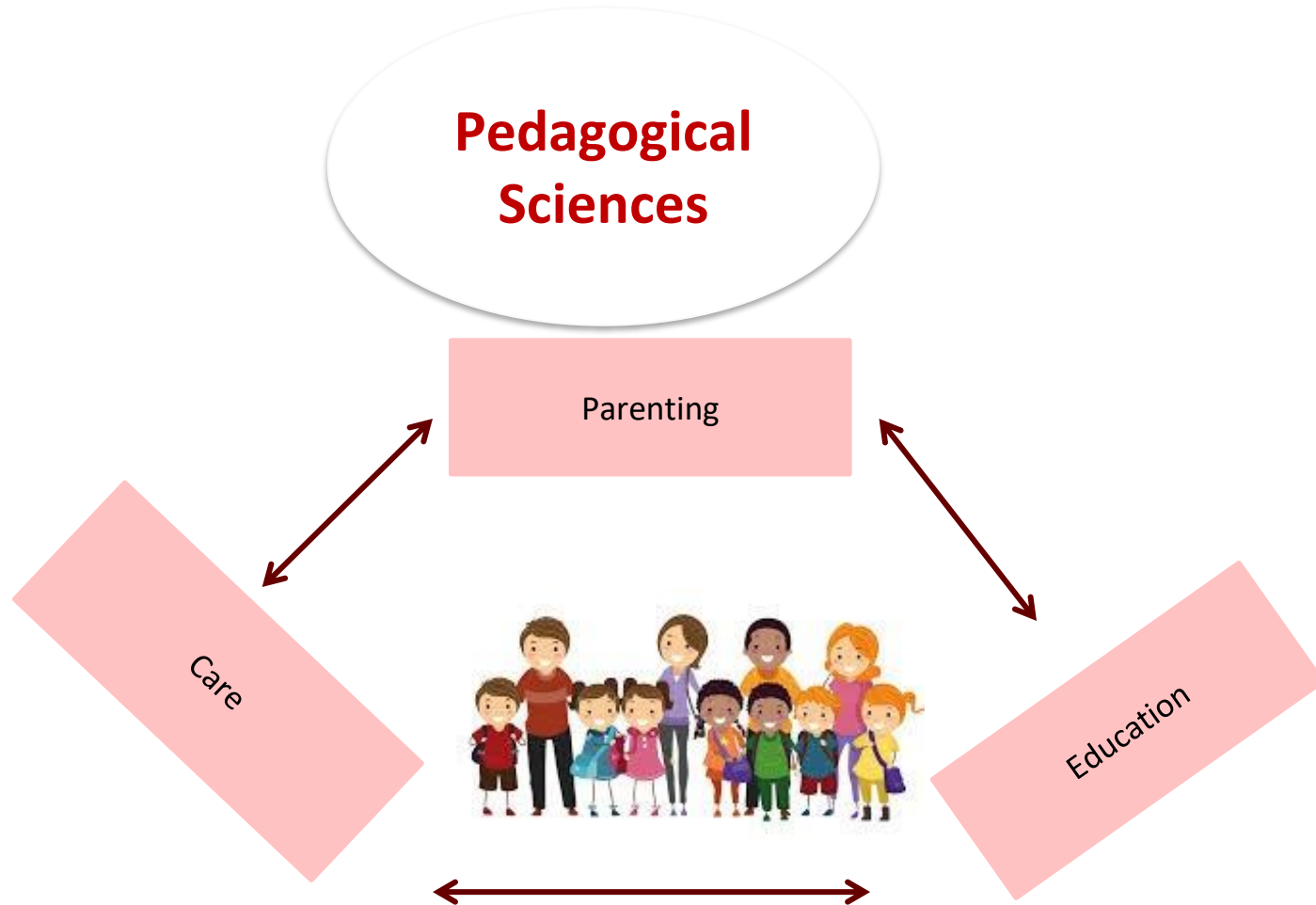


Pedagogical Sciences

Master Pedagogical Sciences: 1 year full-time or 2 years part-time (60 EC)

- Inclusive and Special Needs Education
- Youth⁰⁻²¹, Society & Policy
- Ethics of Education
- **Deafblindness (DB)**







Master Deafblindness

Started in September 2006
Only MA in DB in the world
About 80 Alumni

Learning goals

Students acquire **specialist knowledge and insight in**

- The impact of deafblindness and complex needs
- Education, assessment and treatment approaches
- Differences in vision, policies and practices
- Methods to study deafblindness and complex needs



Prof. Marleen Janssen



Deafblindness

Deafblindness is a combined vision and hearing impairment of such severity that it is hard for the impaired senses to compensate for each other. Thus, deafblindness is a distinct disability.

(Nordic Welfare Organisation, 2018)

1 + 1 ≠ 2

[The-Dutch-Functional-Definition-of-Deafblindness---English-translation-.pdf \(deelkracht.nl\)](#)



Deafblindness



- There are three subgroups
- > people with a congenital hearing and vision impairment
- > people with an acquired hearing and vision impairment (like Usher)
- > people with an age-related hearing and vision impairment

[Cases-about-the-access-to-care-and-education-in-the-NL-English-translation-FEB-2023.pdf \(deelkracht.nl\)](#)

[Femke Krijger: De evenwichtskunstenaar – Ushersyndroom](#)



Impact of deafblindness

See some examples

Life with a happy heart

Gideon, 1,5 years old

<https://youtu.be/1ldNI5KnBRk>

In the car: Wind

UK's first deafblind doctor | Times Reports - YouTube



September 2024	October 2024	November 2024- January 2025	February- March 2025	April-July 2025
term 1a		term 1b	term 2a	term 2b
Intro to Deafblindness (5 ECTS)		Theories and models (5 ECTS)	Participation and Policy (5 ECTS)	
Research Methods (5 ECTS)				
Internship (20 ECTS)				
Thesis (20 ECTS)				



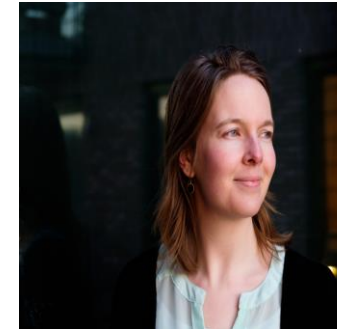
Lecturers in DB courses 2024-25



Prof. Saskia Damen



Dr. Marja Cantell
Coordinator



Dr. Ulrika Klomp & Lisa van der
Mark



Dr. Joe Gibson



Dr. Jude Nicholas



Dr. Paul Hart



LL.M, Author
Femke Krijger



A summary of courses

1) Introduction to Deafblindness (5 EC)

On campus

Topics

- Characteristics of Deafblindness
- Identification and assessment
- Identity and quality of life
- The Impact of Usher syndrome
- Communication interventions
- Stimulating tactile and haptic sign language
- Stimulating cognition
- Embodiment: Observing movement and learning through body
- Outdoor activities



Assignment: online exam with short essay answers



Introduction to DB

Example:

Lecture on stimulating cognitive development

Analysing the video of Mohammed with the fingerdolls





2) Research Methods (5 EC)(*Online*)

A choice between quantitative or qualitative methods

Expert workshops on different methodologies

Assignment: Various assignments supporting the development of a Master Thesis research proposal



3) Theories and models (*Online*)

November-January: Online interactive lectures

Topics

Attachment theory

Intersubjective development

Dialogical theory

Sign language acquisition

Embodied cognition/ tactile cognition

Assignment: Preparatory assignments; Oral exam



4) Participation & Policy (5 EC)(*Online*)

February-March: Tuesdays 10-12

Online lectures, peer learning and practicals

Topics

Concept of participation

Participation in policy

Critical reflection on policies

Formulating policy recommendations

Literature will be available online

Assignment: various types of assignments



5) Internship (20EC) (Oct-July; 16h./35 wks)

Getting insight in the field

Individual internship plan

Practical supervisor & Educational supervisor (RuG)

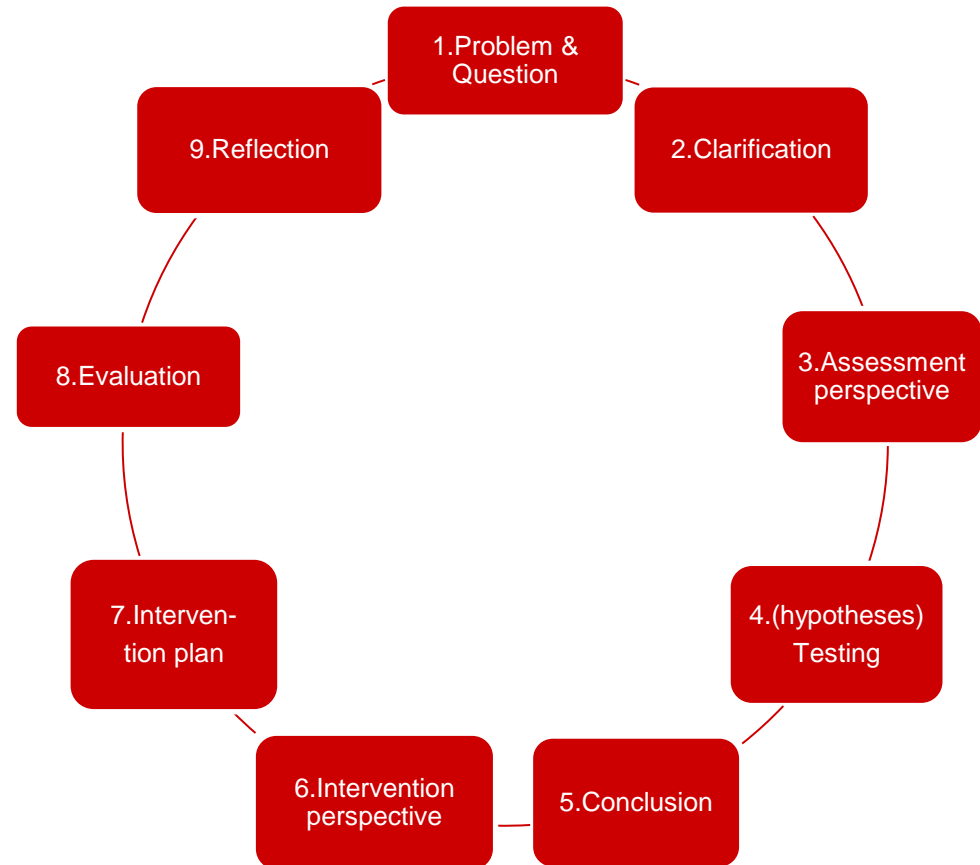
Internship plan and report

- Report on: the internship organization, assessment and intervention methods
 - > critical reflection
- Case description
- Evaluation of internship plan



Case report as part of Internship

Case report
applying diagnostic
intervention cycle





6) Thesis (20 EC) Oct-July

Making a research plan

Data collection

Thesis writing

2 supervisors
(1 RuG/1 guest lecturer)

2 evaluators
(1 RuG/ external evaluator)



Examples of MA research topics

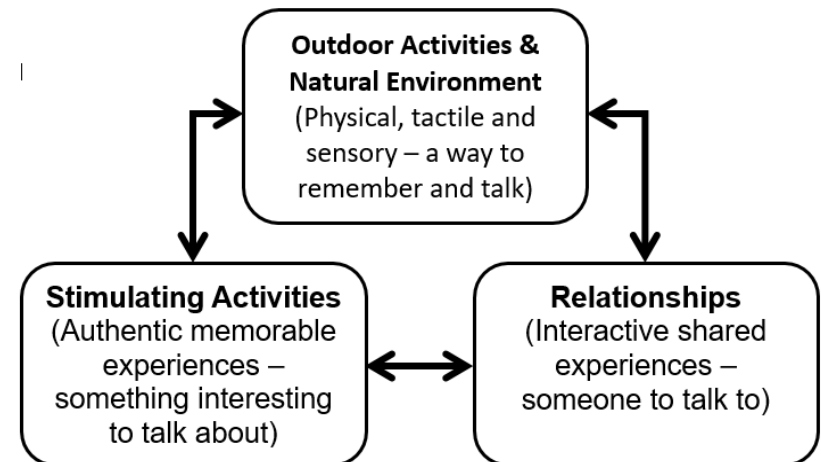
- > Supporting people with CDB in their loss
- > Tactile language development during outdoor activities
- > Multi-party communication
- > Reading tactile books
- > The effects of Yoga
- > Differences in tactile approaches in different countries
- > The emergence of gestures
- > Identity of people with acquired deafblindness

Example of a MA thesis in Deafblindness

› Laura Cowan, applying the theory of Joe Gibson

Can Sailing Performance Be Improved Using Inclusive Communication?

A Case Study of a Deafblind Sailor's Journey into Racing.





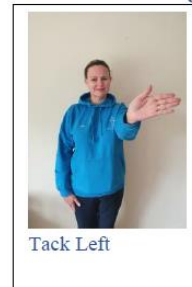
Excerpt from Laura Cowan's MA thesis

>p. 56

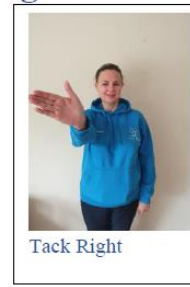
Sailing Signs



Ready



Tack Left



Tack Right



Wind



Sailing Boat 1.



Sailing Boat 2.



Sail Here 1.



Sail Here 2.



No 1.



No 2.



No Sail Here



Buoy

Example of a MA thesis in Deafblindness

>Vikram Choudhary: Connecting Youth and Adults with Acquired Deafblindness:
An Action Research Study to Gain Insights into the Benefits of Age Diversity in Peer-Matching

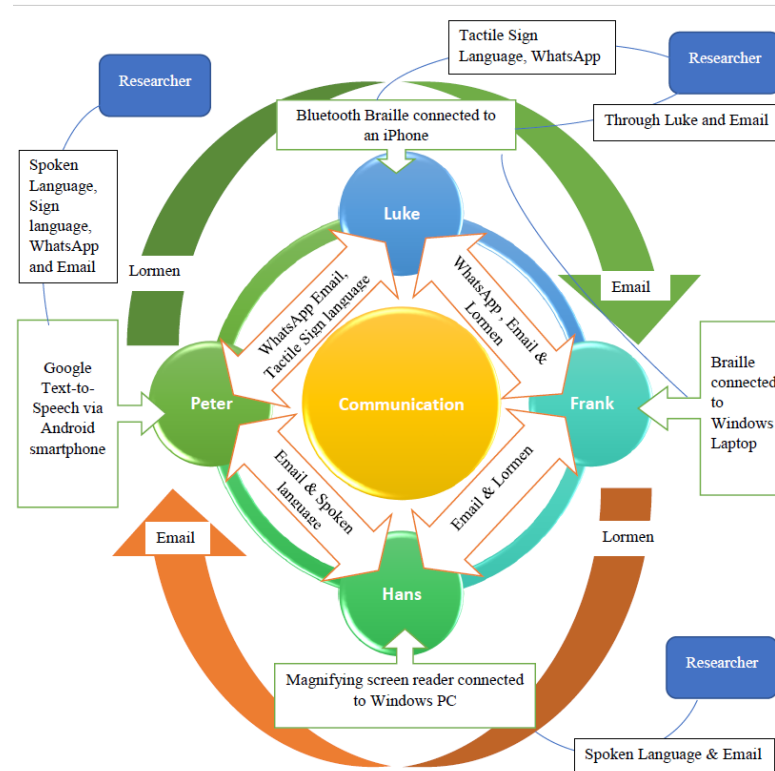


Figure 9: Communication complexities between participants and researcher including use



>A wish list of activities of the participants with deafblindness in Vikram Choudhary's thesis study

- Cooking together
- Baking a cake
- Visiting a Brewery
- Visiting a museum
- Going for a jungle walk
- Skiing
- Going clubbing
- Indoor climbing wall
- Fitness in the park
- Visiting a farm
- Driving a tractor
- Driving a car, motorcycle
- Going inside a cave
- Visiting a loud factory
- Visiting Volkswagen
- Going for a beach walk
- Sailing or paddle boating
- Overnight camping
- Ice hockey and football stadium
- Live music concert
- Horse riding
- Going to a restaurant
- Going to a lake for a picnic
- Hot air balloon ride
- Flying together to another country
- Speaking to a deafblind person from a different country
- Listening to loud music with base
- Playing cards and drinking



Journal of deafblind studies

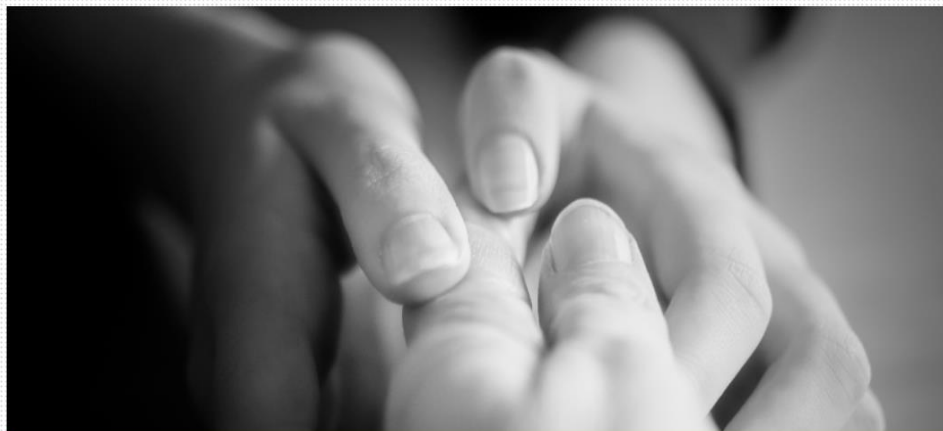
Several students published their research



journal of deafblind studies
on communication

University
of Groningen
Press

[Current](#) [Archives](#) [About](#) ▾



Current Issue

Vol 5 No 1 (2019)

Journal of Deafblind Studies on Communication foregrounds knowledge that is developing in a new academic study-line that focuses on communication and deafblindness from various theoretical perspectives. The study-line is connected to the International Master in Pedagogical Sciences on Communication and Deafblindness at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands.



Why do students choose MA Deafblindness at RuG

- › MA Deafblindness is unique in the world
 - › Interest in an international MA program
 - › Only first course on campus (3 weeks), others online
- › Interest in pedagogical sciences, special needs and inclusive education
 - › Dutch students: Verklaring voor de NVO orthopedagoog
- › Interest in deafblindness, complex needs
- › Interest in doing research, becoming a PhD





Experiences of former students



**Caroline Linström,
Special educationalist, Sweden**

"What I value most is the strong link between the practical field on the one hand and the literature and theory on the other. Most of the students have practical experience. This results in an interesting mix of perspectives which enrich the learning environment. The programme improved my understanding of methodological skills and different interventions which aim to improve communication."



Strength of the MA in DB

- › Small group of students and international classroom
- › Interactive lectures, practical assignments
- › Tools and skills acquired applicable to other people with disabilities
- › Individual co-supervision of internship
- › Individual co-supervision of own research project
- › Lecturers are top experts in the field
- › Possibility of combining study with work/family



Career options

- Obtain a position in the field of deafblindness
e.g., Kentalis, Visio
- Apply knowledge of assessment and intervention tools in clinical/educational contexts in inclusive and special needs education or related fields
e.g., in complex communication needs such as autism, mutism, PIMD
- A basis for starting a private practice
- Performing scientific research, PhD study



What is your title after the master?

- > Master in Pedagogical Sciences (MSc.)





Practical issues: Course location; Ambulatorium



[Contact Details | University Ambulatory Groningen | University of Groningen \(rug.nl\)](#)





The application deadline: June 1st

More information?

Please contact the coordinator:

Dr. Marja Cantell

m.h.cantell@rug.nl

Deafblindness | Pedagogical Sciences | University of Groningen (rug.nl)

