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Nina Davids, third-year PhD student in Behavioural Psychology:
'The expert you need is right next door'

'On the road' is not exactly where you would expect to find a third-year PhD student. However, in my case it is. I drive around the Netherlands in the Behavioural Science Institute's mobile lab – a mini-van that houses a fully-equipped Event-Related Potentials (ERP) lab. I use ERPs to investigate the causes of the severe spelling and reading problems that some children have.

The ERP measures of early precursors of learning to read are used to investigate the level at which things go wrong in children with difficulties in this area. By gaining more insight into the underlying causes of language problems in these children, we are working towards education that is better tailored to their needs. We hope this will eventually make a major difference in their ability to communicate.



A mobile lab makes it much easier to do research in clinical populations. As the children we investigate live all over the country, there would have been little chance of doing this research without this lab.

Moreover, I collaborate closely with colleagues at the Max Planck Institute and the F.C. Donders Centre who are experts in language and ERPs. I feel that the combination of such expertise is crucial to the type of multi-disciplinary research that we do. Here we have it all on one campus. The expert you need is right next door. That really makes a difference.