

## Avital Pelakh

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### SUMMARY

Experimental researcher with training in cognitive science and advanced quantitative analysis; Experience working with multidisciplinary teams and communicating complex findings to technical and non-technical audiences.

Research areas/Expertise: learning; reasoning; problem solving; motivation

### EDUCATION

PhD	University of Pittsburgh, Cognitive Program <i>Minor in Quantitative Methodology</i>	Expected 2026
MS	University of Pittsburgh, Cognitive Program	2023
BS	Montana State University, Psychology	2020

### HONORS AND AWARDS

Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences Graduate Fellowship	2020-2021
Lea Miller Memorial Psychology Scholarship	2019-2020
Robin Mason Memorial Scholarship	2019-2020
Undergraduate Scholars Program Funding Award	2019
Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology	2019
Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi	2019
Montana State University President's Honor Roll	2018-2020

### JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS (PEER REVIEWED)

- Galla, B., Karanam, A., **Pelakh, A.**, & Goldberg, S. B. (2024). Adolescents do not benefit from universal school-based mindfulness interventions: a reanalysis of Dunning et al. (2022). *Frontiers in Psychology*.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1384531>
- Kalinowski, S. T., & **Pelakh, A.** (2023). A hypothetico-deductive theory of science and learning. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tea.21892>

### MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION OR UNDER REVIEW

- Pelakh, A.**, Singh, C., Rottman, B., Nokes-Malach, T. (in prep). *Unifying two threads of research on physics problem solving through their relation to a cognitive theory of insight*.
- Benson-Greenwald, T.M., **Pelakh, A.**, Tumminia, M.J., Jahanian, S., Diamond, M.S., Kuo, E., Good, M. Nokes-Malach, T.J. & Galla, B.M. (under revision). *Building courage, strength, and knowledge: Mindfulness training reduces psychological threat in introductory physics courses*. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/uq3v7>
- Pelakh, A.**, Good, M. L., Kuo, E., Tumminia, M. J., Jahanian, S., Nokes-Malach, T., Galla, B. (in prep). *Psychological threat and problem solving in physics: Relations and effects of mindfulness training as an intervention*.
- Pelakh, A.**, Good, M. L., Kuo, E., Tumminia, M. J., Jamal-Orozco, N., Adelman, A., Nokes-Malach, T., Galla, B. (in prep). *Thematic analysis of student perceptions of resources and demands experienced in introductory physics*.

### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (EXTERNAL)

\*Postbaccalaureate advisee; 5 first author, 10 total; Representative selection shown

- \*Langley, T., **Pelakh, A.**, Benson-Greenwald, T. M., Tumminia, M. J., Jahanian, S., Kuo, E., Galla, B. M., Nokes-Malach, T. (2023, November). *Does Mindfulness Promote Student Beliefs About Transfer?* Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Psychonomic Society, San Francisco, CA.
- Galla, B. M., Tumminia, M. J., **Pelakh, A.**, Jahanian, S., Good, M. Kuo, E., Nokes-Malach, T. (2023, February). *Can mindfulness training support college students' stress management, mental health, and engagement?* Poster presented at the annual conference of the International Society for Contemplative Research, San Diego, CA.
- Pelakh, A.**, Good, M. L., Kuo, E., Tumminia, M. J., Jahanian, S., Nokes-Malach, T., Galla, B. (2022, November 19). Testing associations between mindfulness training, psychological threat, and perceptions of confidence, difficulty, and anxiety during problem solving. Talk presented at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Psychonomic Society, Boston, MA.

Good, M.L., **Pelakh, A.**, Galla, B., Nokes-Malach, T., Tumminia, M. J., Hinshaw, K., Jahanian, S., Kuo, E. (2022, July 13-14). *Psychological Threat and Demands in an Introductory Physics Class*. Poster presented at the Physics Education Research Conference, Grand Rapids, MI.

**Pelakh, A.**, Good, M. L., Kuo, E., Tumminia, M. J., Jahanian, S., Nokes-Malach, T., Galla, B. (2022, April 4-5). *Examining associations between stress appraisals, problem categorization, and solution times in undergraduate physics students*. Poster presented at the Center for Integrative Research on Cognition, Learning, and Education Conference, St. Louis, MO.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (INTERNAL)

8 first author, 9 total; Representative selection shown

**Pelakh, A.** (2024, October). *A case study in experiment refinement: Identifying effects of mindfulness training on motivation and engagement in introductory physics*. Talk presented at the Cognitive Talks Series, Department of Psychology, University of Pittsburgh.

**Pelakh, A.** (2024, March). *Creating dynamic data visualizations with Shiny in R*. Talk presented at the CAMEL (Community for Advanced Methodological Learning) Talks Series, Department of Psychology, University of Pittsburgh.

**Pelakh, A.** (2024, January). *A mixed-methods analysis of student experiences in introductory physics*. Talk presented at the Cognitive Talks Series, Department of Psychology, University of Pittsburgh.

**Pelakh, A.**, Good, M., Kuo, E., Tumminia, M. J., Jahanian, S., Nokes-Malach, T., & Galla, B. (2023, November). *Investigating the relations between mindfulness training, psychological threat, and physics problem solving*. Poster presented at the Learning Research and Development Center Board of Visitors, Pittsburgh, PA.

**Pelakh, A.** (2023, March). *Does mindfulness training affect students’ perceptions during problem solving? Results from a randomized controlled trial among undergraduate physics students reporting psychological threat*. Talk presented at the Cognitive Talks Series, Department of Psychology, University of Pittsburgh.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Independent Research Contractor, Macmillan Learning	2023-2024
<i>Conducted in-person and virtual classroom observations; Qualitative ratings</i>	

## TEACHING, MENTORING, AND ADVISING

Leader / Presenter	Introductory Statistics Workshop for LRDC Interns	2022, 2023, 2024
Teaching Assistant	PSY 422: Cognitive Psychology, University of Pittsburgh (250 students)	Spring 2023
Mentor / Advisor	University of Pittsburgh (10 students)	2020-2024
	<i>Post-Bac/Master’s students (2); Undergraduate Intern/RA (8)</i>	

## SERVICE

University of Pittsburgh, Departmental		
Member	Cognitive Faculty Search Committee	2024
Psychology Rep.	Graduate Student Organization	2024
Member	Communications Committee	2022-Present
Student Coordinator	Cognitive Talks Series	2021

## OTHER SKILLS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Certification	Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) <i>COI PHS; GCP-Social and Behavioral Research; Responsible Conduct of Research; Social-Behavioral-Educational</i>	2024
Certification	Four-Course Specialization in Python Scripting ( <a href="#">Coursera</a> )	2023
Programming Lang.	Advanced: R (dplyr; ggplot; shiny) Proficient: Python; HTML; CSS; JavaScript; SQL	
Software and Dev. Env.	R Studio; Qualtrics; SPSS; Jupyter; GitHub; NVivo; Microsoft Office; Adobe CC	
Spoken Languages	English (native); Russian (fluent speaker)	