AVITAL PELAKH
CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

5417 Guarino Rd   *Phone: (406) 579-5714*
Pittsburgh, PA 15217   *Email: AVP36@pitt.edu*

EDUCATION

University of Pittsburgh
Ph.D., Psychology, Cognitive Program   **Expected 2026**
Minor in Quantitative Methodology
Advisor: Timothy Nokes-Malach

University of Pittsburgh
M.S., Psychology, Cognitive Program   **2023**
Committee: Timothy Nokes-Malach (chair), Brian Galla,
              Scott Fraundorf, Kevin Binning

Montana State University
B.S., Psychology   **2020**
Honors: Graduated with High Honors

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences Graduate Fellowship – 2020-2021, University of Pittsburgh

- Undergraduate Scholars Program Award Recipient – Fall 2019, Montana State University

- Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology – October 2019

- Lea Miller Memorial Psychology Scholarship – 2019-2020, Montana State University

- Robin Mason Memorial Scholarship – 2019-2020, Montana State University

- The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi – January 2019

- Montana State University President's Honor Roll: 2018 - 2020

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Educational interventions targeting reasoning processes, metacognition, and emotions during learning and problem solving.

- Data visualization, quantitative methods, and science communication.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh
- Cognitive Science Learning Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh
- Cognitive Science Society Member
- Psychonomic Society Member

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., 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.

Benson-Greenwald, T. M., **Pelakh, A.**, Tumminia, M. J., Jahanian, S., Diamond, M., Kuo, E., Good, M. L., Nokes-Malach, T., Galla, B. (in prep). RAINing in the physics stress: Mindfulness training reduces psychological threat.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (EXTERNAL)

*Postbaccalaureate advisee

*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 Franscisco, CA.

Benson-Greenwald, T. M., Galla, B., Nokes-Malach, T., Kuo, E., Good, M., Tumminia, M., **Pelakh, A.**, & Jahanian, S. (2023, April). *Engaging mindfully: Mindfulness training promotes psychological engagement in physics.* Oral presentation given at the 94th Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.

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 (ISCR), 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 63rd 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.

Pelakh, A., Good, M. L., Kuo, E., Nokes-Malach, T., Tumminia, M. J., Jamal-Orozco, N., Diamond, M. S., Adelman, A., Galla, B. (2021, July 26-29). *The relationship between intelligence mindset and test anxiety as mediated by effort regulation.* Poster presented at the 43rd Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society.

Pelakh, A., Kalinowski, S. T., & Hutchison, K. A. (2020, March). *Heuristics and Biases in Scientific Reasoning*. Poster accepted at the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association Annual Convention, Denver, CO. (Conference canceled)

McNamee, M., Brito, J., **Pelakh, A.**, Gameon, J. A., & Skewes, M. C. (2020, March). *Associations between historical trauma, quality of life, and substance use among American Indians in rural Montana.* Poster accepted at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research Conference, Bozeman, MT. (Conference canceled)

Pelakh, A., Kalinowski, S. T., & Hutchison, K. A. (2020, March). *Heuristics and biases in scientific reasoning*. Poster accepted at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, Bozeman, MT. (Conference canceled)

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (INTERNAL)

*Undergraduate advisee

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.

Pelakh, A. (2022, March). *Examining associations between stress appraisals, problem categorization, and solution times in undergraduate physics students*. Talk presented at the Cognitive Talks Series, Department of Psychology, University of Pittsburgh.

*Zewail, A., **Pelakh, A.** (2021, August). *The Role of Psychological Framing and Effort in Physics Courses*. Poster presented at the Learning Research and Development Center Summer Undergraduate Internship Poster Session, Pittsburgh, PA.

Pelakh, A. (2021, April). *Slow down, you're moving too fast: Psychological threat, mindfulness, and problem solving behaviors in physics.* Talk presented at the Cognitive Talks Series, Department of Psychology, University of Pittsburgh.

Pelakh, A., Kalinowski, S.T., & Hutchison, K.A. (2019, December). *Heuristics and Biases in Scientific Reasoning*. Poster presented at the Montana State University Student Research Celebration, Bozeman, MT.

INVITED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PANELS AND TALKS

Pelakh, A. (2024, July). *Introductory Statistics Workshop.* Talk presented at the Learning Research and Development Center Summer Internship Program. University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

Pelakh, A. (2023, July). *Introductory Statistics Workshop.* Talk presented at the Learning Research and Development Center Summer Internship Program. University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

Pelakh, A. (2022, July). *Correlations and Linear Regression Models.* Talk presented at the Learning Research and Development Center Summer Internship Program. University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Macmillan Learning

Independent Contractor (Fall 2023 – Spring 2024)
Conducted in-person and virtual classroom observations for a research project focused on supporting sense of belonging and metacognition. The project is funded by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support evidence-based teaching practices.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

PSY 422: Cognitive Psychology, *University of Pittsburgh*

Teaching Assistant (250 students; Spring 2023)
Graded open-response quizzes and research posters, replied to student emails, developed R code and data structure to analyze student submissions, supervised undergraduate TA, provided feedback on instructional design.

MENTORING AND ADVISING EXPERIENCE

University of Pittsburgh (10 Students)

Master's Students (1)
Kristen Hinshaw

Post-Baccalaureate Fellows (1)
Tyree Langley

Undergraduate Research Assistants and Teaching Assistants (7)
Jordann Antoan
Keely Lombardi
Kayla Tupper
Alexi Zukas
Brennon Paik
Alex Luong
Irene Hong
Aishwarya Karanam

Learning Research and Development Center Summer Undergraduate Interns (1)
Aliah Zewail

SERVICE

Community

University of Pittsburgh, Departmental

Cognitive Faculty Search Committee, Member	Fall 2024
Graduate Student Organization, Psychology Representative	2024 - Present
Communications Committee, Member	2022 - Present
Cognitive Talks Series, Student Coordinator	Fall 2021

CERTIFICATIONS

Four-Course Specialization in Python Scripting – Coursera (2023)

- **Click here to view certificate**

- Topics covered: Python programming essentials, Python data representations, Python data analysis, Python data visualization

CITI Training Program:

- Social and Behavioral Science Human Subjects: Social-Behavioral-Educational Course (2020)

- GCP – Social and Behavioral Research Best Practices for Clinical Research (2020)

- Responsible Conduct of Research (2019)

SKILLS

- Programming Languages: R (highly proficient; including interactive applications with Shiny), Python (proficient), HTML (proficient), CSS (proficient), JavaScript (proficient)

- Creative: Photography, Videography, Audio Production

- Software and Integrated Development Environments: R Studio, Qualtrics, SPSS, Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Cloud (Premiere, After Effects, Lightroom, Photoshop, Illustrator, Audition, InDesign)

LANGUAGES

- English – native language

- Russian – fluent speaker

REFERENCES

Timothy J. Nokes-Malach, Ph.D.

Professor, Psychology and Learning Sciences & Policy
Senior Research Scientist, Learning Research and Development Center

University of Pittsburgh
nokes@pitt.edu

Brian M. Galla, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Applied Developmental Psychology, School of Education
Research Scientist, Learning Research and Development Center
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