

AVITAL PELAKH
CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

*5417 Guarino Rd
Pittsburgh, PA 15217*

*Phone: (406) 579-5714
Email: AVP36@pitt.edu*

EDUCATION

University of Pittsburgh

Ph.D., Cognitive Psychology

Expected 2025

Advisor: Dr. Timothy Nokes-Malach

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

- The ways in which students engage with and derive meaning from mistakes during learning and problem solving.
- The effect of mindfulness interventions on thought processes, metacognitive awareness, behaviors, and emotions during learning and problem solving.
- How mindsets and beliefs influence academic engagement and motivation.
- The role of causal and hypothetical reasoning in science learning.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh

- Cognitive Science Learning Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh
- Cognitive Science Society Member
- Psychonomic Society Member

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- *Project: Investigating the Impact of Mindfulness Training to Mitigate Psychological Threat and Enhance Engagement and Learning in Undergraduate Introductory Physics Courses*
Role: Graduate Student Researcher **2020-present**
 PI: Brian M. Galla, Co-PIs: Timothy J. Nokes-Malach, Melanie Good, Eric Kuo
- *Project: Testing and Integrating a Mindfulness Resource in a Large Undergraduate STEM Course*
Role: Graduate Student Researcher **Spring, 2022**
 Project Director: Brian M. Galla, Collaborators: Timothy J. Nokes-Malach and Melanie Good
- *Cognitive Science Learning Laboratory, Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh*
Role: Graduate Student Researcher **2020-present**
 Advisor: Timothy J. Nokes-Malach

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Kalinowski, S.T. & **Pelakh, A.** (Under review at the *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*).
 A Hypothetico-Deductive Theory of Science and Learning.

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS (EXTERNAL)

- 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 to be presented at the 94th Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.
- [Brian's ISCR poster will go here]
- 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*. [Spoken presentation]. 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 presentation]. 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 presentation]. 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 presentation]. 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 presentation]. 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 presentation]. The National Conference on Undergraduate Research, Bozeman, MT. (Conference canceled)
- Pelakh, A.**, Kalinowski, S.T., & Hutchison, K.A. (2020, March). *Heuristics and biases in scientific reasoning*. [Poster presentation]. The National Conference on Undergraduate Research, Bozeman, MT. (Conference canceled)

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS (INTERNAL)

*Undergraduate advisee

- 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*. [Research talk]. 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*. [Research talk]. 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 presentation]. Learning Research and Development Center Summer Undergraduate Internship Program, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Pelakh, A.** (2021, April). *Slow down, you're moving too fast: Psychological threat, mindfulness, and problem solving behaviors in physics*. [Research talk]. 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 presentation]. Montana State University Student Research Celebration, Bozeman, MT.

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 (9 Students)

Master's Students (1)

Kristen Hinshaw

Undergraduate Research Assistants and Teaching Assistants (6)

Jordann Antoan

Keely Lombardi

Kayla Tupper

Alexi Zukas

Brennon Paik

Alex Luong

Learning Research and Development Center Summer Undergraduate Interns (1)

Aliah Zewail

Post-Baccalaureate Fellows (1)

Tyree Langley

SERVICE

Community

University of Pittsburgh, Departmental

Cognitive Talks Series, Student Coordinator

Fall 2021

Member of the Communications Committee

2022 - Present

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), 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, PhD

Associate Professor, Psychology and Learning Sciences & Policy
Research Scientist, Learning Research and Development Center
University of Pittsburgh
nokes@pitt.edu

Brian M. Galla, PhD

Assistant Professor, Applied Developmental Psychology, School of Education
Research Scientist, Learning Research and Development Center
University of Pittsburgh
gallabri@pitt.edu

Steven Kalinowski, PhD

Professor, Department of Ecology
Montana State University
skalinowski@montana.edu

Monica Skewes, PhD

Professor, Department of Psychology

Montana State University
monica.skewes@montana.edu