

Ciara Willett

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EDUCATION

University of Pittsburgh • 2022

PhD & MS in Cognitive Psychology,
minor: quantitative methods

Seton Hall University • 2017

MS in Experimental Psychology,
concentration: cognitive neuroscience

St. Mary's College of Maryland • 2014

BA in Psychology,
minor: educational studies

SKILLS / METHODS

Research

Lab / Online Studies
Focus Groups
Survey Design
Prototyping / Wireframing
Contextual Inquiry
Usability Testing
Intervention-Based Research
Science Communication
Participant Recruitment

Data Analysis

A/B Testing
ANOVA
Linear Regression
Logistic Regression
Mixed-Effects Models
Machine Learning

Tools

Qualtrics	Sketch
MTurk	Figma
E-Prime	Tobii eye tracking
R / RStudio	RShiny
Python	SQL
SPSS	neo4j
HTML/CSS	Javascript/jQuery
GitHub	Google App Engine
Twilio	Google Cloud

SUMMARY

I am a trained cognitive psychologist with 8 years of experience in researching human behavior. My work in causal learning & decision making provides me with a unique perspective, particularly for how people process data and learn about new concepts. I'm an adept problem-solver with expertise in quantitative and qualitative methods. I also have extensive experience in front-end & back-end programming.

WORK & RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Fostering Resilience and Engagement in Law Students

Roles Researcher, Designer, Data Analyst | 2022 - now

- Co-led focus groups to gain insights about the first-year experience.
- Conducted A/B testing of online and in-person interventions that encourage first-year law students to adopt an adaptive mindset.
- Designed a mixed-methods survey to assess the effects of the law school's "grading curve" policy. Analyzed participants' open-ended responses & summarized our findings in a report that led to the dissolution of the policy.

Studying Causal Learning over Long Timeframes

Roles Lead Researcher, Web Developer | 2017 - 2021

- Built a responsive web application (& scheduling software) to study how people learn cause-effect relations over weeks.
- Led teams of 8+ undergraduate research assistants in online & in-person recruitment of over 2000 participants across three studies.
- Developed a daily text-message reminder system using Twilio to maintain large-scale data collection with minimal attrition (2-4%).
- Analyzed large datasets using ANOVAs, A/B tests, & regressions.
- Presented findings at local and national conferences.
- Designed a curriculum to teach undergraduate researchers (without statistical experience) how to conduct statistical analyses in R.

Case Study: Purchasing Internet Online

Roles Researcher, Designer, Data Analyst | Oct - Dec 2020

- Ran a series of contextual interviews and analyzed the findings using affinity diagrams to identify user wants/needs and pain points when purchasing an internet plan online.
- Selected appropriate design sprint methods to brainstorm novel solutions & conducted speed dating sessions to get quick feedback from target customers.
- Developed a prototype that tested two novel features, using Figma. Conducted usability testing & summarized key findings.

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Design / Research

HCI for Technology Executives
Advanced Research Methods

Advanced Data Analysis

Data Visualization
Data Management
Machine Learning
Mixed Effects Models
Applied Regression Analysis

Human Behavior

Decision Science and Policy
Human Skill Acquisition
Human Cognition and Memory

HONORS & AWARDS

Big Idea Blitz, 2nd place | 2022
University of Pittsburgh

Graduate Council Award | 2021
Learning, Research &
Development Center at the
University of Pittsburgh

Tim Post Award for Excellence in Research, 2nd place | 2020
Learning, Research &
Development Center at the
University of Pittsburgh

St. Mary's Scholar Award for Academic Performance | 2014
St. Mary's College of Maryland

Showcase Project Award for Undergraduate Thesis | 2014
St. Mary's College of Maryland

SERVICE

Psychology Equity, Inclusion, and Community (PEIC) Committee, web developer | 2019 - now
Graduate Student Organization, representative for Psychology department | 2019 - now
Cognitive Program Communications Project, founding member | 2019
Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania, volunteer | 2018 - now
Cognitive Psychology Program, student representative | 2018
TeenTech Workshop for Women in STEM, volunteer | 2016

Teaching "Why Correlation Doesn't Imply Causation"

Roles Lead Researcher, Designer, Data Analyst | 2021 - now

- Designed and tested three methods of teaching students how to use causal diagrams to illustrate alternative explanations for a correlation in an observational study.
- Used insights from results and participant feedback to make iterative changes & improve performance.
- Mentored undergraduate research assistants in research methods and qualitative coding techniques.

cliMate - A Smartphone App to Reduce Climate Anxiety

Roles UX Researcher, Design Lead | 2022

- Collaborated with a team of clinical psychologists to develop an app that utilizes therapy techniques to reduce climate anxiety & help users engage in climate action.
- Conducted focus groups with the target market and communicated key insights with stakeholders.
- Designed a pitch deck for the "Big Idea Blitz" competition at the University of Pittsburgh; our team won 2nd place!

Teaching Fellow

Course Research Methods in Psychology | 2019 - now

- Primary instructor for course sections with 90+ undergraduate psychology students.
- Deliver engaging online & in-person lectures about foundational principles of research.
- Develop homework assignments to encourage deeper understanding of the material & designed assessments to evaluate students' knowledge and progress in the course.
- Designed an RShiny application to help students visualize when they should control for third variables in a regression.
- Mentored undergraduate teaching assistants.