

# EFFAT FARHANA

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<https://effat.github.io/>

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## RESEARCH INTERESTS

My research expertise lies in developing Data Mining, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Machine Learning (ML) methods addressing unique challenges arising in specific application domains, such as education and healthcare. Publications in EAAI@AAAI, ICLR- Tiny Paper, GECCO, ICSE, and L@S.

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## EDUCATION

- **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Computer Science** Aug 2015 - April 2021
  - Dissertation title: “Science Reading Behavior of Middle School Students within a Digital Literacy Platform”
  - Adviser: Dr. Collin F. Lynch
  - Committee: Dr. James Lester, Dr. Noboru Matsuda, and Dr. Teomara Rutherford
  - North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC, USA
- **Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Computer Science and Engineering** Feb 2011
  - Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh

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## AWARDS & HONORS

- **Rising Star in Data Science- Jan 2021, University of Chicago.**  
For my Ph.D. work. organized by the Center for Data and Computing (CDAC), University of Chicago.  
[Link](#)
- **Scholarship by ACM Richard Tapia Celebration of Diversity in Computing, 2020**  
To present a poster based on my Ph.D. work in ACM Student Research Competition.
- **Travel award**  
To attend the Women in Machine Learning (WiML) workshop, co-located with NeurIPS 2020 (virtual).
- **Travel award**  
For [CRA-WP Widening Participation Early and Mid Career Mentoring Workshop, 2020](#)
- **Scholarship by Women in Computer Science (WiCS), NC State**  
To attend Grace Hopper Conference, 2018.
- **Dean’s List Award**  
Received this award for achieving academic excellence for six semesters during the Bachelor’s program at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.
- Attended Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE) CAREER Proposal Writing workshop Spring 2022

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## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- **Postdoctoral Research Scholar** Jul 2021 - Present  
Department of Computer Science, Vanderbilt University  
Nashville, TN
- **Graduate Teaching Assistant / Research Assistant** Aug 2015 -May 2021  
Department of Computer Science, North Carolina State University  
Raleigh, NC
- **Lecturer, Department of Computer Science** Apr 2011 - Dec 2014  
Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

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## SELECTED RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

### North Carolina State University

- Topic: **Automated Question Generation for Science Reading** (NLP, ML)
  - Automatically generating questions for K-12 science text and validating with domain experts.
- Topic: **Sequential User Behavior Modelling in an Online Reading Platform** (ML, Data Mining)
  - Designed a transformer-based model to predict 12,000 students' question scores incorporating contextual information of questions and learning activities. The proposed model performed better than state-of-the-art approaches.
  - Interpretable visualization of the transformer's attention can help teachers to identify students' study habits and performance ([EAAI-AAAI 2022](#)).
  - Identified reading and meta-cognitive behavior patterns for 12.5K science and 16.2K social study student data. ([L@S 2020](#))
- Topic: **Responsible AI: Interpretable Classification Algorithm Design** (Interpretable ML)
  - Developed a rule-based classification algorithm, BBO-RM, using an evolutionary algorithm, Biogeography- based optimization (BBO). BBO-RM performed significantly better compared to baseline classification algorithms on 14 UCI repository datasets ([GECCO 2017](#)).
  - Implemented a parallel version of the BBO-RM algorithm utilizing Julia programming language's data slicing techniques and Julia's parallelization features. ([GECCO 2018](#)).

### Vanderbilt University

Working in research projects involving people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Cross-disciplinary research between departments of computer science, psychology, and medical school at Vanderbilt.

- Topic: **Block Design Test and ASD** (Time Series Analysis, Data Mining)
  - Understanding users' behavior patterns in the block design test and linking behavioral patterns to users' visual thinking abilities (i.e., how well they can reason about visual information). In the block design test, a user has to rearrange a pile of colored blocks to a target design.
- Topic: **Educational Game to Teach Social Skills to ASD Kids** (ML, Data Mining, Psychology)
  - Designing user surveys and applying data mining and machine learning techniques to connect kids' in-game performance with social skills.

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## PUBLICATIONS

### Drafts In-preparation

1. WOMBAT: Web-based Online Measurement of a Block Arrangement Task for Characterizing Visuospatial Cognition in Neurodivergent Individuals  
**Effat Farhana**, Deepayan Sanyal, James Ainooson, Caoimhe Harrington Stack, Yejin Jeong, Raymond Yates, and Maithilee Kunda.
2. Automated Question Generation for Science Education  
**Effat Farhana** et al.

### Peer-Reviewed Journals and Conference Publications

1. **[ICLR Tiny Paper 23]** Rethinking Positional Embedding: A Case Study in Temporal Event Sequence Modelling  
**Effat Farhana**  
Co-located with Eleventh International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR) 2023 (*To Appear*).

2. [EAAI@AAAI 22] Predictive Student Modelling in an Online Reading Platform  
**Effat Farhana**, Teomara Rutherford, and Collin F. Lynch.  
Twelfth AAAI Symposium on Educational Advances in Artificial Intelligence (EAAI-AAAI 2022) .
3. [ACS 22] Framework for a multi-dimensional test of theory of mind for humans and AI systems  
Caoimhe Harrington Stack, Sarah Myers, **Effat Farhana**, Aviv Roskes, Xinyu Shen, Simeng Zhao, Angela Maliakal, Roxanne Rashedi, Joel Michelson and Maithilee Kunda  
The Tenth Annual Conference on Advances in Cognitive Systems (ACS 2022).
4. [JSERD 21] An Empirical Study of Bugs in COVID-19 Software Projects  
Akond Rahman and **Effat Farhana**  
Journal of Software Engineering, Research, and Development (JSERD), 2021.
5. [L@S 20] Understanding Reading Behaviors of Middle School Students  
**Effat Farhana**, Teomara Rutherford, and Collin F. Lynch.  
Proceedings of the Seventh ACM Conference on Learning @ Scale (L@S 2020).
6. [ICLS 20] Associations Between Self-Regulated Learning Strategies and Science Assignment Score in a Digital Literacy Platform  
**Effat Farhana**, Teomara Rutherford, and Collin F. Lynch.  
*Proceedings of the International Conference of the Learning Sciences (ICLS 2020)*.
7. [EDM 20] Investigating Relations between Self-Regulated Reading Behaviors and Science Question Difficulty  
**Effat Farhana**, Teomara Rutherford, and Collin F. Lynch.  
*Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on Educational Data Mining (EDM 2020)*.
8. [ICSE 20] Gang of eight: A Defect Taxonomy for Infrastructure as Code Scripts  
Akond Rahman, **Effat Farhana**, Chris Parnin, and Laurie Williams.  
*Proceedings of the 42nd International Conference on Software Engineering, (ICSE 2020)*
9. [EMSE 20] The ‘as code’ Activities: Development Anti-patterns for Infrastructure as Code  
Akond Rahman, **Effat Farhana** and Laurie Williams.  
*Empirical Software Engineering. 25, 3430–3467 (EMSE 2020)*.
10. [ICSME 19] Synthesizing Program Execution Time Discrepancies in Julia Used for Scientific Software  
**Effat Farhana**, Nasif Imtiaz and Akond Rahman,  
*IEEE International Conference on Software Maintenance and Evolution (ICSME 2019)*
11. [MSR 19] Challenges with Responding to Static Analysis Tool Alerts  
Nasif Imtiaz, Akond Rahman, **Effat Farhana** and L. Williams.  
*IEEE/ACM 16th International Conference on Mining Software Repositories (MSR 2019)*
12. [GECCO 17] Biogeography-based Rule Mining for Classification  
**Effat Farhana** and Steffen Heber.  
Proceedings of the Genetic and Evolutionary Computation Conference (GECCO 2017).
13. [Inf. Sci. 15] Constrained sequence analysis algorithms in computational biology  
**Effat Farhana**, and M. Sohel Rahman.  
*Information Sciences 295 (2015)*.
14. [Inf. Process. Lett. 12] Doubly-constrained LCS and hybrid-constrained LCS problems revisited  
**Effat Farhana**, and M. Sohel Rahman.  
*Information Processing Letters 112.13 (2012)*.
15. [SPIRE 15] Finite Automata Based Algorithms for the Generalized Constrained Longest Common Subsequence Problems  
**Effat Farhana**, Jannatul Ferdous, Tanaeem M. Moosa, M. Sohel Rahman.  
17th International Symposium of String Processing and Information Retrieval, (SPIRE 2010).

#### Peer-Reviewed Workshop, Poster Publications, and Others

1. [EDM 18] Predicting Post-College STEM Enrollment from Middle School Clickstream Data  
**Effat Farhana**, Maaz Saleem Kapadia, Wenjia Cao, and Collin F. Lynch.  
*Workshop on Scientific Findings from the ASSISTments Longitudinal Data Competition: (EDM 2018)*.

2. [GECCO 18] A Parallel Island Model for Biogeography-based Classification Rule Mining in Julia  
Samuel Ebert, **Effat Farhana**, and Steffen Heber.  
*Proceedings of the Genetic and Evolutionary Computation Conference Companion (GECCO 2018)*.
3. [EDM 21] Feedback and Self-regulated Learning in Science Reading  
**Effat Farhana**, Andrew Potter, Teomara Rutherford, and Collin F. Lynch.  
*Proceedings of the 14th International Conference on Educational Data Mining (EDM 2021) (Poster)*.
4. [EDM 20] Self-Regulated Learning and Science Reading of Middle-School Students  
**Effat Farhana**, Teomara Rutherford, and Collin F. Lynch.  
*Doctoral Consortium. The 13th International Conference on Educational Data Mining (EDM 2020)*.

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## GRANT PROPOSAL WRITING

MD-ToM: Multi-domain assessment of theory of mind skills for adolescents on the autism spectrum.  
PI: Dr. Maithilee Kunda.

- **Role:** Designed and wrote the Data Analysis part under the Research Plan Section.  
Result: Submitted to the Institute of Education Science (IES).

Collaborative Research: EAGER: AI-Assisted Just-in-Time Scaffolding Framework for Exploring Modern Computer Design

PIs: Dr. Mohammad Alian, Dr. Md Tauhidur Rahman

- **Role:** I will collaborate with PIs to develop AI-driven modules for personalized learning as an unfunded collaborator .  
Result: Submitted to the National Science Foundation (NSF).

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## MENTORING

North Carolina State University.

- Samuel Ebert, CS undergraduate Aug 2017- Aug 2018  
Interpretable ML algorithm project at NC State. This work resulted in a student's lead author paper (GECCO 2018).

Vanderbilt University

- Jeannie Jeong, undergraduate in Cognitive Science Fall 2021 - Summer 2022  
Project on visual-spatial skills in the workplace.  
Current position: Stanford Department of Medicine, Healthcare AI Applied Research Team.
- James Foglio, undergraduate in CS Summer 2022  
Project on Block Design and ASD Performance.
- Raymond Yates, MS intern at the Frist Center for Autism and Innovation Summer 2022  
Visualization on ASD project.

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## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- **North Carolina State University** Fall 2016 - Spring 2020
  - Teaching Assistant (TA)
  - TA for graduate level courses: Design and Analysis of Algorithm (~ 200 students), Software Engineering (~ 30 students), and Artificial Intelligence (~ 60 students).
  - Created assignments and exam questions, held office hours, and graded.
- **Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology** April 2011 - Dec 2014
  - Lecturer in Computer Science and Engineering
  - Instructor for undergraduate-level introductory programming language, design and analysis of the algorithm, and compiler courses.

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## SERVICES

### Reviewer

2023	Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)
2023	International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR) Tiny Paper
2023	AAAI Symposium on Educational Advances in AI (EAAI) at AAAI (AI in Education Track)
2023	International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED)
2022	AAAI/ACM Conference on Artificial Intelligence, Ethics, and Society (AIES)
2022	International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED)
2022	ACM Transactions on Computing Education (TOCE)
2022	Advances in Cognitive Systems (ACS)

### Sub-reviewer/Shadow PC

2021	International Conference on Educational Data Mining
2021	Mining Software Repository (MSR)

### Volunteering

2021	Judge for VandyHacks (Vanderbilt's premier student hackathon)
2020	Ph.D. panel member at Doctoral Recruiting Day, NCSU
2017	NC State International Graduate Student Orientation

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## INVITED TALKS

Machine Learning and Data Science for Social Good (Spring 2022)	Florida International University
Theory-grounded Predictive Systems and Interpretability (Spring 2023)	Auburn University

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## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- [Affiliate](#) at The Frist Center for Autism and Innovation, Vanderbilt University
- ACM Professional Member
- AAAI Member