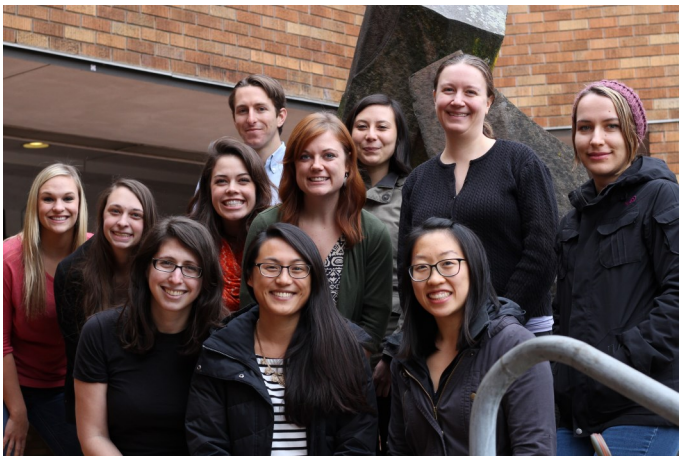
NeuDLL News

Newsletter of the Neurodevelopmental Disorders Language & Learning Lab

At the University of Washington

Introduction to the Lab

The focus of the Neurodevelopmental Language and Learning (NeuDLL) lab is the development of language abilities in children with neurodevelopmental disorders. Our mission is to investigate the consequences of neurodevelopmental disorders on language development. The goal of this research is to understand how children develop skills related to language and communication so that those skills may eventually be supported to allow each individual to develop to his or her full potential.



Sara Kover with members of the NeuDLL lab: From left to right (front row) Juliet Gordon, Emily Wu, Kerry Lam, (Middle Row) Becky Musard, Amber Surveski, Sydney Barnes, Molly Harris, Tamara Bobrovytska, (back row) Aaron Flaster, Sasha Fegan
Not Pictured: Caroline Vandewater, Donna Lee, Natasha Arora

Noodle Word Search (NueDLL.. Noodle.. Get it?)

U R F A R F A L L E
O W I U M H K C X C
Y Y L G G C K P K A
I N O R A C A M X V
B T H P A T C O R A
V I I H Q W O S O T
C I H Z W I C N T A
S P A G H E T T I P
E N N E P J K P N P
B P R B U D Z R I I

CAVATAPPI
FARFALLE
MACARONI
PENNE
RIGATONI
ROTINI
SPAGHETTI
ZITI

NeuDLL Lab Current Study :

Word Learning in Children with Fragile X Syndrome or Autism Spectrum Disorder: The Impact of Cognitive Processing, Linguistic Processing, and Social Factors

The NeuDLL lab is excited to announce our newest project, a study on word learning called *MAPping* - a study on how Memory, Attention, and Phonology relate to learning new vocabulary.

This study investigates how children learn words, taking into account characteristics of the words themselves and the situation in which the word is learned. This study will focus on children with fragile X syndrome and autism spectrum disorder, as well as typically developing children. Fragile X syndrome and autism spectrum disorder are two neurodevelopmental disorders that have some similar impairments, but different underlying causes. Children will be primarily recruited from the greater-Seattle area.

Despite other research conducted on fragile X syndrome and autism spectrum disorders, little is known about how memory and attention specifically relate to word learning for children with these disorders. This study will shed light on factors that may make word learning more difficult for

Participate in research on how children learn language!

The NeUDLL Lab at the University of Washington is conducting research on how children learn words! We are seeking children who have autism spectrum disorder, fragile X syndrome, or no developmental disabilities.

To learn about opportunities to participate in our research visit our website (http://depts.washington.edu/sphsc/labsites/kover/about.htm) or contact us at

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some children. Results of this study could lead to specific interventions for children with these neurodevelopmental disorders.

The MAPping study involves a variety of activities. Some activities involve learning made-up names for unfamiliar objects. The introduction of new items and words allows us to be sure that no one has been exposed to the words before and to control the properties of the words. We are interested in whether word learning is affected by aspects of the word itself, such as its length and how similar it sounds to other words in the English language, or other factors.

Sometimes these types of tasks are completed in social interaction with an examiner and sometimes using a non-social situation on a screen.

Results from the MAPping study will give us further insight into vocabulary acquisition in children with FXS and ASD. We hope that results from this study will lead to further work on language development in children with FXS and ASD.

Q & A With Lab Research Assistant Donna Lee

Q: Tell me about yourself .
A: . I'm born and raised in Oakland (long before it was Oaklandish) and educated in its much beleaguered public school system. I received a BA in medieval English literature from UC Berkeley (where "smale fowles maken melodye") and a post-bacc in speech-language pathology from Sacramento State. In between, I got a certificate in baking and pastry. Also, I like to quote songs from the early aughts.
Q: Why were you interested in working in this lab?
A: While a student at Sac State, I worked at the MIND Institute where my supervisor and director had previously done research with Dr. Kover at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. I was excited to extend my education beyond the classroom and clinic. On top of that, I got in the field because of my interest in language acquisition.
Q:What are you hoping to see/learn out of the NeuDLL lab?
A: While I don't have a propensity for research, I think it's useful to get an insider's look in order to inform the way I consume research. I look forward to learning from our participants and families. And having been in the lab for a year, working in an intimate setting with a truly brilliant and kind group of people has been a win for me.

Q: What are your plans after grad school?
A: I've often stymied by the number of options I have. All I know for certain is that I'd like to support medically fragile individuals and their families. Additionally, a personally important cause is working with underserved populations, basically people who are like my family: immigrant, non-English speakers living in poverty. Whether I do work as a paid employee or pro bono, my goal is to reach those in need who may not realize resources exist.
Q: What do you do in your time outside of the lab?
A: I like to cuddle under a blanket with a mug of tea, a book of Monday-level crosswords, and Jim Dale reading Harry Potter. I also like to talk to strangers while standing in line at the grocery store. When I'm feeling really zesty, I like

Meet the Principal Investigator: Training and Background Experience

Dr. Kover's journey to the UW to research language acquisition in neurodevelopmental disorders began as a Cognitive Science and German major at Johns Hopkins University. Her first experience with research and fragile X syndrome was at the Kennedy Krieger Institute with Dr. Michele Mazzocco. She then attended graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to study language development in fragile X syndrome and other disorders. She received her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology under Dr. Leonard Abbeduto and completed post-doctoral training with Dr. Susan Ellis Weismer in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. Her time at UW-Madison was greatly enhanced by her training at the Waisman Center, which shaped her strong appreciation for interdisciplinary programs. She's thrilled to be here at the UW to continue her work!

Contact Dr. Kover
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