



Project Code: Ganea

APD 1210 RESEARCH PRACTICUM COURSE – FALL/WINTER

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS 2026-2027

Name and Title: Patricia A. Ganea, Professor

Lab Website: <http://www.languageandlearninglab.com/>

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: Imagination and reasoning in young children

NUMBER OF STUDENT PLACES AVAILABLE: 2

PRIMARY MODE OF RESEARCH PLACEMENT PARTICIPATION (circle one option and describe):

☐ *IN PERSON*

☐ *REMOTE (ONLINE)*

☒ *HYBRID/FLEXIBLE*

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY: The objective of this project is to examine children's ability to imagine and reason about alternatives to reality. Specifically, we are interested in the development of children's ability to think counterfactually – that is, to reason about events that did not happen, but could have happened. We examine the development of this ability using a variety of tasks, including short stories presented on computers, and hands-on science learning activities. We are interested in different factors that influence children's counterfactual reasoning (e.g., fantasy vs. realistic contexts; biological vs. psychological events) and the contexts in which children engage spontaneously in counterfactual thinking, as well as the relation between counterfactual reasoning and other imaginative abilities (e.g., future thinking). The studies are conducted in our lab, at daycares and online with children from 3 to 10 years of age.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDENT PARTICIPATION: We would like to fill the position with a student who has a keen interest in cognitive development, strong interpersonal, communication, and organizational skills, and experience working with children. The student should be dedicated to developing their skills as a researcher, and will play an integral role in the project as a Research Assistant. They will conduct relevant literature reviews, help to recruit and test participants, record results, and conduct data analyses using statistical software. The student will be trained on all relevant methods and tasks. They will also attend and participate in monthly lab meetings. The student will work under the supervision of Dr. Patricia Ganea and will have the opportunity to work closely with other graduate student members of the lab. By actively participating in all stages of the research project, students will develop their own research skills and interests.



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DAY AND TIMES OF LAB MEETINGS: Lab meetings are determined at the beginning of each semester and are dependent on the availability of all lab members.