Kelsey R. Allen

Senior Research Scientist, DeepMind

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EDUCATION

2021

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

PhD GPA: 5.0/5.0 · Brain and Cognitive Sciences ·

THESIS: Learning to act with objects, relations and physics

Advisor: Prof. Joshua Tenenbaum

2014

The University of British Columbia, Vancouver

BSc GPA: 3.85/4.0 · Honours Physics · Minor: Computer Science

Thesis: Searching for high-mass dilepton resonances with ATLAS

ADVISOR: Prof. Oliver Stelzer-Chilton

Honors and Awards

2022	Robert J. Glushko Best Dissertation	Prize in Cognitive Science,	Cognitive Science Society

2018 Robotics: Science and Systems Best Paper Award

2015-2017 Angus MacDonald Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching

 ${\tt 2016} \qquad {\tt NSERC\ Postgraduate\ Scholarship-Doctoral\ (PGS\ D)}$

2015 Albert And Barrie Zesiger Fellowship

2014 Singleton Fellowship NSERC CGS-M (Declined)

Rudi Haering Medal (top graduating student in Physics) Carl Bradford Robertson Premier Undergraduate Scholarship

Wesbrook Scholar, for leadership, academics and service

TREK Scholarship, awarded to top 5% of faculty of Science for academics

Thomas and Evelyn Hebb Memorial Scholarship

ARTA TW Insurance Scholarship for community service, communication and scholastic achievement

Arthur Crooker Prize for best aptitude for experimental physics

2009-2013 Dean's Honour List

2013

2012 Chair's Scholar - University of Toronto

2011 Best poster - SFU

Bruce Marshall Prize

Co-op scholarship for valuable team contribution at MDA

2010 Stuart Olson Dominion Education Bursary

Publications

PEER REVIEWED

Under Review

Y. Rubanova, T. Lopez-Guevara, **K.R. Allen**, W. Whitney, K. Stachenfeld, T. Pfaff. (Under Review). Learning rigid-body simulators over implicit shapes for large-scale scenes and vision. *Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)*.

W. Whitney*, T. Lopez-Guevara*, T. Pfaff, Y. Rubanova, T. Kipf, K. Stachenfeld, **K.R. Allen**. (2024). Learning 3D Particle-based Simulators from RGB-D Videos. *International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR)*.

K.R. Allen*, F. Braendle*, ..., E. Schulz. (2024). Using games to understand the mind. *Nature Human Behavior*.

^{*} indicates equal contribution.

- **K.R. Allen***, K. Smith*, L. Bird, J.B. Tenenbaum, T. Makin, D. Cowie. (2024). Lifelong embodied experience affects cognitive styles for physical problem-solving. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*.
- N. Monath, M. Zaheer, **K. R. Allen**, A. McCallum. (2023). Efficient dual-encoder training with a dynamically maintained index. *AISTATS*.
- K.R. Allen*, Y. Rubanova*, T. Guevara, W. Whitney, A. Sanchez-Gonzalez, P. Battaglia, T. Pfaff. (2023). Face Interaction Graph Networks for learning rigid body dynamics. *International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR)*.
- 2022 K.R. Allen*, T. Guevara*, K. Stachenfeld*, A. Sanchez-Gonzalez, P. Battaglia, J. Hamrick, T. Pfaff. (2022). Physical Design with Differentiable Learned Simulators. *Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS)*.
- K.R. Allen, T. Guevara, Y. Rubanova, K. Stachenfeld, A. Sanchez-Gonzalez, P. Battaglia, T. Pfaff. (2022). Graph network simulators can learn discontinuous, rigid contact dynamics. *Conference on Robot Learning* (*CoRL*).
- M. Pelz, K.R. Allen, J.B. Tenenbaum, L. Schulz. (2022). Foundations of Intuitive Power Analyses in Children and Adults. *Nature Human Behavior*.
- H. Wang, K. R. Allen, E. Vul, J. E. Fan. (2022). Learning composable world models for physical prediction. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society.*
- J. Loula, **K.R. Allen**, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2021). Combining rules and simulation to explain infant physical learning. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society (Oral)*.
- **K.R. Allen***, K. Smith*, L. Bird, J.B. Tenenbaum, T. Makin, D. Cowie. (2021). Meta-strategy learning in physical problem-solving: the effect of embodied experience. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.
- **K. R. Allen***, A. Bakhtin*, K. A. Smith, J. B. Tenenbaum, L. van der Maaten. (2020). Ogre: An object-based generalization for reasoning environment. *NeurIPS Workshop on Object Representations for Learning and Reasoning (Oral)*.
- J. Loula, **K.R. Allen**, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2020). A Task and Motion Approach to the Development of Planning. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.
- **K.R. Allen**, K.A. Smith, U. Piterbarg, R. Chen, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2020). Abstract strategy learning underlies flexible transfer in physical problem solving. *Proceedings of the 41st Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*.
- **K.R. Allen***, K. Smith*, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2020). Rapid trial-and-error learning with simulation supports flexible tool use and physical reasoning. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.
- J. Loula, K.R. Allen, T. Silver, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2020). Learning constraint-based planning models from demonstrations. *International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS)*.
- T. Silver, **K.R. Allen**, A. Lew, L. Kaelbling, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2020). Few-shot Bayesian imitation learning with logical program policies. *AAAI*.
- 2020 C. Sun, **K.R. Allen**, S. Tonegawa. (2020). Neural and computational basis for organizing episodic experience into event units. *Cosyne*.
- **K.R. Allen**, E. Shelhamer, H. Shin, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2019). Infinite Mixture Prototypes for Few-Shot Learning. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML)*.
- V. Xia*, Z. Wang*, **K.R. Allen**, T. Silver, L. Kaelbling. (2019). Learning sparse relational transition models. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR)*.
- **K.R. Allen***, K. Smith*, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2019). Rapid Trial-and-Error Learning in Physical Problem Solving. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society (Oral)*.
- J. Loula, T. Silver, **K.R. Allen**, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2019). Discovering a symbolic planning language from continuous experience. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.
- J. Gill, **K.R. Allen**, A. Williams, M. Goldman. (2019). High-dimensional filtering supports context-dependent neural integration. *Cosyne*.
- M. Toussaint, K. Allen, K. Smith, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2018). Differentiable Physics and Stable Modes for Tool-Use and Manipulation Planning. *Robotics: Science and Systems (Best paper award)*.
- 2018 F. de Avila Belbute-Peres, K. Smith, K.R. Allen, J.B. Tenenbaum, J. Z. Kolter. (2018). End-to-end

- differentiable physics for learning and control. *Proceedings of the 32nd International Conference on Neural Information Processing Systems* (NeurIPS) (Spotlight).
- J. Hamrick*, **K. Allen***, V. Bapst, T. Zhu, K. McKee, J.B. Tenenbaum, P.W. Battaglia. (2018). Relational inductive bias for physical construction in humans and machines. *Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.
- **K. Allen**, I. Yildirim, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2016). Integrating identification and perception: A case study of familiar and unfamiliar face processing. *In Proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society.*
- **K. Allen**, I. Yildirim, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2015). A model of familiar and unfamiliar face processing. *NeurIPS Workshop on Black Box Inference and Learning (Spotlight)*.
- K. Allen, J. Jara-Ettinger, T. Gerstenberg, M. Kleiman-Weiner, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2015). Go fishing! Responsibility judgments when cooperation breaks down. *In Proceedings of the 37th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society*.
- E. Pless, J. Queriolo, N. Pinter-Wollman, S. Crow, **K. Allen**, D.M. Gordon. (2015). Interactions increase foragers availability and activity in harvester ants. *PLoS One*.
- K. Allen, G. Carenini and R. Ng. (2014). Detecting Disagreement in Conversations using Pseudo-Monologic Rhetorical Structure. *In Proceedings of the 2014 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing* (EMNLP).
- ATLAS Collaboration (listed author for substantial contributions). (2014). Search for high-mass dilepton resonances in pp collisions at \sqrt{s} =8 TeV with the ATLAS detector. *Physics Review D*.

OTHER

- 2018 T. Silver*, K. R. Allen*, J.B. Tenenbaum, L. P. Kaelbling. (2018). Residual Policy Learning. arXiv.
- P. W. Battaglia, ..., K. R. Allen, (2018). Relational inductive biases, deep learning, and graph networks. *arXiv*.
- **K.** Allen, L. Hewitt, J. Wu, J.B. Tenenbaum. (2016). Analysis-by-synthesis for speech recognition. *Women in Machine Learning at NeurIPS*.

Invited Talks

Jul 2024	Physical problem-solving in minds and machines DLRL Summer School
Jun 2024	Physical problem-solving in minds and machines Lower level intelligence workshop at the Simons Institute
Mar 2024	Physical problem-solving in minds and machines AI and Cognitive Development Workshop
Dec 2023	Physical problem-solving in minds and machines <i>UC Davis</i>
Dec 2023	Simulation from States and Sensors Stanford Vision AI Lab
Dec 2023	Simulation from States and Sensors Temporal Graph Learning NeurIPS Workshop
Jul 2023	Abstractions for planning and reasoning CogSci Abstractions Workshop
May 2023	Relational representations for reasoning in humans and machines <i>Columbia Center for Theoretical Neuroscience Seminar</i>
May 2023	Intuitive Physics: no one tool for the job Workshop on Imagistic Cognition - Vienna
Mar 2023	Physical problem-solving in minds and machines New York University
Mar 2023	Physical problem-solving in minds and machines <i>University of British Columbia</i>
Mar 2023	Physical problem-solving in minds and machines University of Washington

Mar 2023	Physical problem-solving in minds and machines UMass Amherst
Feb 2023	Physical problem-solving in minds and machines <i>University of Toronto</i>
Feb 2023	Physical problem-solving in minds and machines McGill University
Jan 2023	Physical problem-solving in minds and machines UC San Diego
Jan 2023	Physical problem-solving in minds and machines UC Berkeley
Jan 2023	Physical problem-solving in minds and machines Carnegie Mellon University
Dec 2022	Graph networks for innovation and design NeurIPS Frontiers of Graph Learning Workshop
Dec 2022	Relational inductive biases for human-level innovation and planning with tools Conference on Robot Learning (CoRL) Workshop on Geometry, physics, and human knowledge as inductive bias in robot learning
Oct 2022	Robust modeling and manipulation with learned simulators International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS) Workshop on the Role of Uncertainty in Manipulation
Aug 2022	Rational simulation Computational Cognitive Neuroscience GAC Workshop on Simulation
Jul 2022	Learning to act with objects, relations and physics Glushko Symposium
Jun 2022	Physical design with graph network simulators Princeton Plasma Physics Lab Seminar
Apr 2022	Towards more human-like, structured behavioral priors for tool use and construction ICRA Workshop on Behavior Priors
Apr 2022	The surprising diversity of human tool use ICRA Workshop on Predicting Human Motion
Mar 2022	Relational representations for reasoning in humans and machines COmputational SYstems NEuroscience (COSYNE) Workshop on Inductive biases
Feb 2022	Towards a recipe for physical reasoning in humans and machines UCL NeuroAI Seminar
Dec 2021	Intuitive Physics: no one tool for the job NeurIPS Workshop on Physical Reasoning and Inductive Biases for the Real World
Nov 2021	Towards a recipe for physical reasoning in humans and machines NYU Brains, Minds and Machines Colloquium
Oct 2021	Towards a recipe for physical reasoning in humans and machines Causality in Cognition Lab at Stanford
Aug 2021	Towards a recipe for physical reasoning in humans and machines Cognitive Tools Lab at UCSD
Jul 2021	Symbolic planning and simulation in the physical world CogSci 2021 Workshop: Symbolic and sub-symbolic systems in people and machines
Jul 2021	Physical Reasoning in Games CogSci 2021 Workshop: Using Games to Understand Intelligence
Jul 2021	Less Supervision, More Structure International Conference on Machine Learning Unsupervised Reinforcement Learning Workshop
Jun 2021	Safety through structured learning in physical problem-solving environments International Conference on Robotic Automation 2021 Workshop on Safe Control
Apr 2021	Towards a recipe for physical reasoning in humans and machines CogAI Seminar
Mar 2021	Meta-strategy learning in physical problem-solving: the effect of embodied experience <i>UCL Plasticity Lab</i>
Mar 2021	The power of structured action and dynamics models MonREAL/Montreal Robot Learning Seminar
Dec 2020	Learning to act and predict with objects, physics and modes

	University of Pennsylvania GRASP Lab
Nov 2020	Rapid learning and generalization in physical problem solving Indiana University Cognitive Science Colloquium
Nov 2020	Learning to act and predict with objects, physics and modes <i>UMass Amherst: Machine Learning and Friends Colloquium</i>
Oct 2020	Rapid learning and generalization in physics-based puzzle solving Cognitive and Neural Computation Lab - Yale
Sep 2020	Rapid learning and generalization in physics-based puzzle solving Computational Principles of Intelligence Lab
Apr 2020	Learning to act and predict with objects, physics and modes Facebook AI Research
Apr 2020	Learning to act and predict with objects, physics and modes Google Brain
Mar 2020	Rapid trial-and-error learning with simulation supports creative physical reasoning and tool use MIT Brain and Cognitive Sciences Interview Weekend

Advising

2024-	Jack Dewey (Research Assistant at MIT)
2023-	Matthew Lai (PhD student through UCL / DeepMind)
2023 - 2024	Ziyi Wu (Student Researcher at Google DeepMind)
2020	Robert Chen (now Senior student at MIT)
2018 - 2020	Ulyana Piterbarg (now PhD student at NYU)
2019	Gabrielle Kaili-May Lu (now Senior student at MIT)
2019	Mariana Gomez (now Data Scientist at General Motors)
2018 - 2019	Hanul Sky Shin (now Research Scientist at Samsung)
2018	Jade Yu, co-advised with Prof. Tim O'Donnell (now PhD student at University of Toronto)
2018	Nathalie Fernandez (now Research Assistant at MIT)
2018	Yunhan Zhao (now PhD student at UC Irvine)
2018	Soumya Ram (now Data Scientist at Microsoft)
2016 - 2018	Jessy Lin (now PhD student at UC Berkeley)
2017 - 2018	Austin Garrett (now AI Software Engineer at IBM)
2016 - 2017	James Bloxham, co-advised with Prof. Tim O'Donnell (now Research Engineer at MosaicML)

Teaching

Fall 2015 - 2021	MIT: Computational Cognitive Science Advisor and Teaching Assistant (~120 students) Led recitations every three weeks, held office hours, assisted with grading, and advised students developing research-based class projects. For 2018 - 2021, provided advising on student projects only.
Summer 2016 - Marine Biological Laboratory: Brains, Minds and Machines Summer School	
2019	Advisor and Teaching Assistant (~40 students) Advised students on research projects in <i>Development of Intelligence</i> and <i>Core Knowledge</i> pillars.

Winter 2013 UBC: Introduction to Computer Science

experiments.

Teaching Assistant (~50 students)

Assisted with multiple recitation sessions of introductory computer science course for students who have never taken computer science. Worked in the lab with students, held office hours, and assisted with grading.

Supported students during tutorials on probabilistic programming, optimization, and running online

Service

RSS 2022	Co-Organizer for RSS Workshop on Differentiable Physics for Robotics	
CogSci 2021	Co-Organizer for Cognitive Science Society (CogSci) Workshop on Games for Understanding Intelligence	
NeurIPS 2020	Co-Organizer for Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS) Workshop on Differentiable computer vision, graphics, and physics in machine learning	
CVPR 2020	Program Chair for Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition (CVPR) Workshop on Learning with less labels	
NeurIPS 2019	Co-Organizer for Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS) Workshop on Perception as generative reasoning	
NeurIPS 2018	Co-Organizer for Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS) Workshop on Modeling the Physical World	
CogSci 2017	Co-Organizer for Cognitive Science Society (CogSci) Workshop on Deep Learning for Cognitive Science	
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Cognitive	Cognitive Science Society Annual Meeting (CogSci), Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), Nature Human Behavior (NHB)	
Neuroscience	Neuron, Computational and Systems Neuroscience (COSYNE)	
Robotics	International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA), Robotics: Science and Systems (RSS), International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS)	
Machine Learning	The Society for AI and Statistics (AISTATS), International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML), International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR), Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS), Women in Machine Learning (WiML), SIGGRAPH, Transactions on Machine Learning (TMLR)	
Other	NSF CAREER Grants in Cognitive Neuroscience, NSF Computational Neuroscience Grants	
(OUTREACH AND LEADERSHIP	
2021 -	Mentor in DeepMind Mentorship Program Provided mentorship for students from under-represented groups in research and industry.	
2020 - 2022	Developer of Exhibition on Tool Use and Robotics at MIT Museum Created and designed an activity on our work about tool use for the MIT Museum.	
2019 - 2020	Boston Museum of Science Communicator Participated in "Meet a Scientist" outreach events, after school programs, and developed an activity based on my own research for visitors to the museum.	
2019 - 2020	Graduate application assistance program Volunteered to help underrepresented students applying to MIT's Brain and Cognitive Sciences PhD program with writing their application materials.	
2018 - 2019	REFS (Resources for easing friction and stress) for Brain and Cognitive Sciences Trained to become certified conflict resolution mediator, and established peer-to-peer counselling program within Brain and Cognitive Sciences.	
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Center for Brains, Minds and Machines (CBMM) Trainee Leadership Council

2016 - 2021

Planned and organized events for professional and social development of trainees in the CBMM program.

2017 - 2020 **Guest Lecturer for Crofton House School**

Gave guest lectures on paths to STEM careers for high-school girls.

CodeIt Mentor 2016

With the Society for Women Engineers, I helped facilitate a series of weekly 4 hour Scratch programming classes for middle school girls.

Founder of Physics Mentorship program (UBC) 2013 - 2014

Founded and led mentorship program for undergraduate students in Physics at the University of British Columbia (UBC).

GIRLsmarts SAP Student Leader 2013 - 2014

As a student leader for the inaugural GIRLsmarts grade 7 program, in partnership with SAP, I helped to design a Music & Technology workshop for grade 7 girls. This included interviewing students, organizing groups of SAP volunteers for workshop creation, and overseeing the activity in February.

References

Leslie P. Kaelbling lpk@csail.mit.edu
Brenden Lake brenden@nyu.edu
Dan Yamins yamins@stanford.edu
Andrew McCallum mccallum@cs.umass.edu
Judy Fan jefan@ucsd.edu

June 23, 2024