

## Postdoctoral Fellowship Opportunity in Reading Research at the Language and Literacy Lab at Dalhousie University

Dr. Hélène Deacon, Director of the Language and Literacy Lab at Dalhousie University, is seeking a Post-Doctoral Fellow to support her large-scale research program dedicated to understanding the skills children and adults need to achieve full literacy. This one-year fellowship includes a minimum salary of \$46,000 (CDN), health benefits, conference travel funds, and has the possibility for extension based on performance review and adequate funding. The start date is flexible. Should it be of interest, there are also opportunities to gain teaching experience. LLL Post-Docs have exceptional employment rates; most have gained tenured faculty positions in Education, Linguistics, and Psychology at highly regarded universities across North America and around the world, and many others are working in highly impactful positions, such as data analysts with Statistics Canada and as directors of educational programs.

### Research in the Language and Literacy Lab

As a Post-Doc in the lab, you will contribute to several research projects, including with opportunities to initiate your own research. These can include any of the below, based on interests and skills. You will be encouraged and supported to write manuscripts and present your findings at national and international conferences. Note that we have data-sets ready to analyze, publish, and make an impact in the field, as well as new projects that we are launching!

*Leaps and Bounds: From Reading Words to Understanding Texts:* We have just completed a 6-year longitudinal research study on how children's oral language skills underpin their reading development from grades 1 to 6. In this study, we captured morphological, syntactic, and prosodic skills, and word reading and reading comprehension, including in digital contexts. Trainees can get involved in analysing and publishing this rich, six-year longitudinal data set. Learn more about this study on our [website](#).

### Get Involved in New and Innovative Research

*The Power of Children's Learning in Their Reading Development:* To be successful readers, children must learn how to map oral language on to print. While a great deal of attention has been devoted to the importance of oral language, far less attention has been paid to the other piece of the puzzle: the role that print plays in learning to read. Our project addresses this question by assessing what young children know about print, as well as their orthographic learning skill, and investigating how these contribute to strong reading development over time. We are preparing to launch the first year of data collection in the Winter of 2025 for this new four-year longitudinal study. There are opportunities to add measures and join this innovative project.

### Join an International Team of Experts Exploring Digital Literacy

*Digital Literacy: How Do Children Understand What They Read Online?* The medium in which reading is occurring is shifting; children are increasingly reading in a digital format. One of the main distinctions between paper-based and digital reading is the presence of digital features. These features may distract children from reading in a deep and focused manner. We are working with a wide range of learners, to understand the skills that different children use while reading digitally. As education moves online at a pace far greater than our understanding of digital environments, our findings will examine how we can best support children's digital understanding of text across the elementary grades.

### Get to Know Us!

[Dr. Hélène Deacon](#) is a Member of the College of the Royal Society of Canada and a Professor in the Faculty of Science at Dalhousie University, where she directs the [Language and Literacy Lab](#). She completed her doctoral research as a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford in 2004 and has secured over \$16 million in research funding. She is currently co-Director of a new 2.5-million-dollar Partnership Grant: Ensuring Full Literacy in a Multicultural and Digital World. Deacon has world-renowned expertise in reading development, with active collaborative research examining how children achieve the reading skills they need to fully participate in society. Deacon's research is conducted with

amazing partner schools and collaborators around the world. In 2022 she was named as one of the top 2% scientists in the world, across all disciplines and ages, by Stanford University.

Dr. Deacon's direct mentorship of research students focuses on producing high quality research and training outcomes. Her training philosophy is guided by principles of Universal Design for Learning; an evidence-based instructional framework that promotes inclusive and equitable learning opportunities that recognize, respect, and support individual learning differences in diverse learners, enabling the highest quality training environment for all.

The LLL is a well-resourced research lab that consists of a diverse and well-rounded [team](#) of postdocs, graduate and undergraduate students, volunteers, and research staff. Team members work in a friendly and collaborative environment that includes weekly lab meetings and social (sometimes adventurous!) outings. The LLL frequently connects outside of the lab to enjoy events like picnics, food truck festivals, coastal hikes, kayaking, ziplining, and cultural events. The team is supported by a full-time lab manager and is connected, both nationally and internationally, to a wonderful group of collaborators who often come to visit, join in meetings, and give colloquium talks. To learn more about the LLL visit our [website](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#) pages.

The Language and Literacy Lab is in the [Psychology and Neuroscience Department](#) of [Dalhousie University](#) which is located in the heart of [Halifax, Nova Scotia](#), Canada. Halifax is a vibrant and historic city on the Atlantic Coast of Canada; the summer is a wonderful time for interns to explore this city, its beautiful waterfront, and fun festivals.

### **What Do We Look For in a Post-Doc Applicant?**

- recently graduated with a PhD in Psychology, Linguistics, or Education. Students nearing completion of a PhD are also encouraged to apply and indicate on their application their anticipated date of dissertation submission.
- strong quantitative data analysis skills, with preference for SEM and/or multi-level modeling experience
- experience conducting language and literacy research
- an excellent academic record
- a professional demeanor, effective interpersonal skills, and be self-motivated
- strong oral and written communication skills (writing sample could be requested)
- a clear Criminal Record, Vulnerable Sector, and Child Abuse Registry checks and/or be able to obtain

### **Additional Funding Opportunities**

The below organizations offer Post-doctoral Fellow funding.

*Canadian and International students can apply for:*

- [Killam Postdoctoral Fellowship \(Dalhousie University\)](#)
- [Mitacs Accelerate](#)
- [Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship](#) (note that the **deadline is EARLY!** The University's internal deadline is July 22<sup>nd</sup>)

*Canadian students can apply for:*

- [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council \(SSHRC\)](#)
- [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council \(NSERC\)](#)
- [Fonds de recherche du Québec – Society and Culture \(FRQSC\) - Postdoctoral Fellowship \(Quebec Citizens Only\)](#)

### **Interested In Joining Our Team?**

Please send a copy of your CV, transcripts (unofficial on copies are fine!), 3 professional and/or academic references, and a brief cover letter describing your scientific interests and why you are the best candidate for the position by email to Dr. Hélène Deacon at [Helene.Deacon@dal.ca](mailto:Helene.Deacon@dal.ca), cc'ing [langlabmanager@dal.ca](mailto:langlabmanager@dal.ca) and we will find a time to connect.