EARLY CAREER AWARD FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH

NOAM SIEGELMAN, PH.D.

Dr. Noam Siegelman is a Senior Lecturer (equivalent to a US Assistant Professor) in the departments of Psychology and Cognitive and Brain Sciences at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel). Noam's research is concerned with reading, learning, and their intersection. In particular, his research aims to understand the immense variability that exists between individuals in their literacy skills in light of their learning capacities and the properties of their native language's writing system. This work is based on the development of computational tools that mathematically quantify writing systems in terms of their statistical properties, and the use of behavioral, eye-tracking, and neurobiological methods to unveil how readers differ from one another in their ability to utilize this rich statistical structure to read efficiently. His studies have shown that, indeed, readers vary substantially in their sensitivity to different types of regularities encompassed in their writing system, and that this variability has important implications for explaining reading skills as well as intervention gains in children with reading disabilities.

Noam completed his BA (2011), MA (2014), and PhD (2019) at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His PhD dissertation under the supervision of Prof. Ram Frost focused on individual differences in statistical learning, namely, the mechanism underlying the human ability to extract regularities from sensory inputs. He conducted postdoctoral work (2018-2021) at Haskins Laboratories (CT, USA) with Profs. Kenneth Pugh and Jay Rueckl as advisors, supported by funding from the Rothschild Foundation and the Israel Science Foundation. This is where he became fascinated with reading and the prospect of understanding reading from a learning perspective. In addition to his faculty role at the Hebrew University, Noam is an affiliated Research Scientist at Haskins Laboratories and a member of the Haskins Global Literacy Hub.