

# 2025 Global Research Internship

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**University/ Department:** National DongHwa  
University

**Internship University:** University of British  
Columbia/ Infant Studies Centre

**Supervisor:** Dr. Janet Werker

**Project Title:** Using Machine Learning to  
Explore how Rhythm Engages Infant Brain  
and Behaviour During Word Learning

**Period:** May 19th, 2025 - August 8th, 2025

## Application and Preparation

- **First connection with GRI?**

The journey began with the motivation of taking a RA position in a foreign institute since I planned to take my PhD in either the state or Canada. I looked it up just on Google and from one of the senior interns as well. Therefore, I started to prepare all the documents right after I got the information about Mitacs internship. Fortunately, I'd got a bunch of time to prepare and revise the application materials way before the actual application cycle started.

- **What to prepare?**

Honestly, I would say the only thing that matters is your research experience and how matched you are with the PI and lab. It is obvious that you should be confident in speaking English at least in daily conversation, but better to also skill at academic occasions since the interview comes with English. Other documents like CV, language proficiency, motivation letter, rec letter, they do count as part of your application, but will not be valued as much as research interest fit and the skills you can bring for the lab's ongoing project. As for the interview, I was lucky enough to get 4 interviews, some of them were with the lab manager and post-doc that I was going to work with closely rather than professors. I would highly recommend that it is crucial to understand the lab's envision and ongoing projects if possible and also pay more attention to the question and answer part of the interview as it is normally the part that you can stand out from other candidates. Be careful to ask the most valuable questions and always ask questions that can not be answered on the lab's website or professor's paper.

- **After the offer?**

I chose to stay at on-campus single-studio housing which was provided by mitacs and UBC student housing and as the lab I worked with is just two minutes walk from the dorm, which obviously saved a lot of commuting time. If you have a budget on housing, I would rather suggest a sublet from students who are enrolled at UBC but back to their home country during summer vacation. For Taiwanese students, ETA is enough for 12 weeks internship, but to be noticed, i20 work permission is needed and can be requested at immigration centre at the airport.

\* more info plz look it up on rednote, [searching\\_meganccc](#)

## About Internship

- Onboarding: I learned from experienced RAs and lab managers, such as their daily tasks, which include responding to parents, updating the booking list, booking records, preparing visit packages, and so forth.
- Getting to immerse myself in an academic environment with Dr. Erica. Her ongoing project investigates whether rhythmicity facilitates word learning by combining brain activity measurements through EEG, visual behavioral data collected using an eye-tracker, and potentially affective and facial expressions captured through video recording. The ultimate goal of this research is to carry out a machine learning study on physiological data. As a literature review, we know it would probably be the very first study ever to try to create an ML study to better predict children's word learning capacities. As an undergraduate, I shadowed Erica and Bianka executed the study on our first pilot baby, I wish I could get on the right track for this research as soon as possible because I believe that I will learn a lot from the project, as well as co-workers' prior experiences.

Things are going on track since the 2nd week.

- At the beginning, I was extremely nervous and afraid of the mock call. As an Asian kid, I've always been taught that you can not make any mistakes, and this family can not tolerate any errors. Therefore, I have always been afraid of doing something wrong, that is, paying too much attention to how other people think about me. I am so scared that I will imagine how people judge my performance and behaviors. It took me a long time to set up my mindset, to be open enough to embrace different sounds and feedback. I am so happy to be in the team of Werker Bee. My co-workers encouraged me you got this, don't think too much, just go for it, and then reflect on it." They always tell me that we can practice until you truly feel confident on doing a parent contact. I love the way everyone in the lab motivates and encourages me.
- Finally, I figured out that the reason I am here which means I am capable of doing research things, just need to built more confidence and keep going. I am here to learn more rather than stepping at the same place, I need to transform this experience into stepping stone toward my academic journey and career. So, I did all the mock calls, and it turned out pretty good tho. Meanwhile, I wrote down

some feedback from my lovely co-workers, to help myself better reflect and practice. Moreover, I have learned many details and practical experience from the training, from very basic one, such as how to turning on the auditory on the display PC computer, to something more professional, such as the method and tips to measure a baby's head and how to apply EEP cap on baby's head properly and efficiently. I believe that practices make perfect, I still need to carry out some EEG experiments with Dr. Erica.

Everything comes with a reason.

- Dr. Erica chose me as mitacs intern because I've got some experience on eye-tracking experiments, and happened to be the same hardware they are use at the infant studies centre. That's probably why I mentioned that research experience and fit are the two most important things that can decide if you get accepted by the lab. It is the best experience ever to work on a project with Dr. Erica! I've learned a lot EEG knowledge from her (stealing those wisdom for my graduate school ) I've also gained plenty of experience on eye-tracking experiment with several problem-solving skills.
- For the final presentation, I gave a talk focused more on the side of eye-tracking results, although it was an extremely preliminary outcomes from a limited sample size. Dr. Erica still encouraged me to present on our lab meeting and showed everyone what we've collected since my internship started. I've learned a lot of generating an academic slides, doesn't need to be complicated or decorative, it should be as simple and clear as possible, "never waste your time on preparing a fancy slides, if you have time put effort on how to articulate your presentation and make it super clear for the audience." This was what my post-doc said to me that I valued and learned from.

## **Life and Culture in Vancouver**

In general, I didn't experience much culture shock since I was in the state for my previous internship for quite a while and I've got some friends from around the world, so it is way easier for me to fit into the western culture and environment. When it comes to lifestyle in Vancouver, I would love it except for rainy days; I am addicted to it here. Cozy lifestyle, where people are not really in their rush for anything, because in Taiwan, you can see a lot of people rushing for their lives. Slow-paced lifestyle makes me feel comfortable and productive every day. To be honest, I believe that there is always a room for improvement, especially in language. I went back to Taiwan for two weeks before the internship started, so I was so rusty at speaking English in daily conversation and at work. I've learned from all the lovely colleagues and my supervisor, not only when and how to start a small talk, but also the pragmatic way of English.

I've got to know other mitacs interns who are also from Taiwan. We shared our experience of working at different fields and labs. During weekend, we spent time together travelling about vancouver island and even went to victoria by ferry. It is always good to know peers from the same country or share the same culture.

## **General**

For everyone, being confident in who you are and all the effort that brings you there for the internship, you deserve way more than it. I would say imposter syndrome is common among every occupation and every stage of your life, the only thing is try to accept and live with it, living in the past too much would stuck you there for the previous failed experience, being anxious too much about the future brings unnecessary worries about the unknown. The best advice is to being in the present, doing whatever you think is true and will help yourself get better, especially if you ever feel lost during the internship.