

Dr. Kathleen Cook's Lab  
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**Overview:** I am engaged in both basic (theoretical research that adds to our understanding of human behavior) and applied (practical research intended to address a problem) research.

My **basic research** is in the area of social cognition. In general, my research concerns people's perceptions and how those perceptions affect their views of themselves and their experiences. Frequently my questions concern social justice issues. For example, I've studied the roles of gender and power in person perception and jurors' use of their nullification power.

My **applied research** is in the areas of health and education. In the area of health, I study our perceptions of the risks involved with drug use and with unprotected sexual contact and attitudes toward care of the dying. For example, do people perceive tobacco to be riskier than marijuana? In education, I study methods for effective teaching and learning. For example, do skills learned in one class transfer to another? Does inverting the classroom improve education?

There are two current applied projects with opportunities for student involvement.

- I. **Attitudes toward Care of the Dying:** With our aging population comes an increased need for clinicians who can capably and comfortably provide care for those at the end of life (EOL). In fact, both the AACN and APA expect would-be practitioners to be competent with EOL issues. Given that our curriculums don't have space for Death and Dying courses, might we be able to affect attitudes with a single class session? A pre-/post-test with Nursing students showed improved attitudes. Do these attitudes hold through to their graduation? Does offering a class session on EOL improve Growth and Development students' attitudes?
- II. **Identity Change in Engineering Students:** Identity is an important determinant of students' persistence in and commitment to their fields. Seattle University's Mechanical Engineering Department is changing its program and curriculum to better connect students to industry. Do these changes lead to stronger engineering identities?

Duties: Tasks include literature gathering and review, data collection and data analysis, problem development and pilot testing.

Requirements: Ideally students should have completed the Statistics and Research Methods sequence; however, students in process will be considered.

The commitment is 3-6 hours per week for two (or more) quarters. Students may participate via the Psychology Practicum Program (1-2 credits) or may volunteer.

Benefits: Students will be guided through the tasks and mentored by me. Students who perform well can expect an endorsement/recommendation from me. There may be opportunities for presentation and/or publication.