

## Development Across the Lifespan

## BRAIN BUZZ™

Thursday November 2, 2006

MUSC Room 318, 12:00–2:00 PM

## Attendees:

Margaret Denton	Hertzel Gerstein	Bhagwati Gupta
Mary Law	Kalpana Nair	Bruce Newbold
Jenny Ploeg	Peter Rosenbaum	Louis Schmidt
Allison Sekuler	Anne Snider	Byron Spencer
Peter Szatmari		

## Regrets:

William Boreham	Audrey Hicks	William Malloy
Parminder Raina	Allison Williams	

## 1. Lunch and Opening Remarks:

Allison welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided a brief overview of Collaborations for Health and an outline of the meeting. The goal of the meeting was to have a multidisciplinary group of university faculty with research interests that fall within a 'Development Across the Lifespan' theme, to have an opportunity to meet, to share information about their work with one another, and to identify new research questions that might link people across disciplines and across lifecourse research.

## 2. Introductions:

People introduced themselves briefly to the large group.

## 3. BRAIN BUZZ™

Allison explained the concept of the BRAIN BUZZ as a form of intellectual speed dating, the intent of which would be for people to discover quickly if there was interesting common ground in research across disciplines that was worth pursuing. Each individual met with every other individual in the room for a 5 minute period. During each 5 minute meeting, people were asked to share information about their research. Everyone enthusiastically participated.

## 4. Group Discussion:

There was limited time left in the meeting for people to share specific ideas regarding interesting areas of inquiry and research questions that people had identified, but it was agreed there would be follow up asking people to forward these to the theme leaders. As a general wrap-up to the meeting Allison asked people to indicate if they had found the session useful and if they would be willing to build on a session like this and the ideas generated in the session in order to begin to develop a research focus for the theme in a larger retreat setting. In general people were enthusiastic about their experience with the BRAIN BUZZ and in agreement with next steps outlined by Allison. Other comments included:

**Hertzel Gerstein:**

- The group would benefit from having representation from Engineering.
- An initiative like this needs “human glue” in the form of Fellows in order to take an interesting research question and work with investigators from more than one discipline around a project. These projects should lead to grants, with support from these more senior investigators and help begin to bridge the disciplines.

**Allison Sekuler:**

- Faculty should be using the opportunity to build trainees into grant applications to support these interdisciplinary Fellows.

**Peter Rosenbaum:**

- Transcending the language of different disciplines and writing a successful interdisciplinary grant application will take some skill and perhaps the new research officer will be able to assist with this.

**Peter Szatmari:**

- We should seek out opportunities to develop courses that cross cut disciplines such as Byron Spencer’s course in longitudinal data management or Louis Schmidt and Mike Boyle’s course in developmental science. The data management course and the existence in Byron’s unit of multiple databases provide the opportunity for different disciplines to access the same data for different purposes.

**Byron Spencer:**

- Byron felt that these datasets were currently being under utilized and represented an excellent resource for interdisciplinary research.

**Peter Rosenbaum:**

- Researchers are energized by interesting questions and we need to bring people together around questions. This will help them find points of convergence across and between their disciplines.

**Hertzel Gerstein:**

- Researchers work best when they can focus on an interesting question.

**Peter Szatmari:**

- CfH needs to be more explicit about its goals. It seems too vague for people to understand what it is and how and why they might become involved.

**Allison Sekuler:**

- Allison suggested inviting students to the large group retreat for the theme.

## 5.Wrap up:

### Next steps will include:

- Hold 2 more BRAIN BUZZ events for additional invited faculty representing the potential spectrum of researchers within a Development Across the Lifespan theme.
- Ask all BRAIN BUZZ participants to send in the key research questions they were able to identify during or following the BRAIN BUZZ experience.
- Precirculate the questions to invitees to the large group retreat.
- Ask all BRAIN BUZZ participants to identify what they could bring to these questions in terms of interest and expertise.
- Use the combination of these research questions and expertise to set some organizational goals for the Development Across the Lifespan theme and begin to describe how the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.