UConn BIRC Speaker Series

Friday, February 18th from 1:30-2:45 pm ET

'Leave them kids alone': a brief history of building a brain imaging lab in Brazil and investigating children and adolescent early literacy and exposure to violence

Augusto Buchweitz, PhD, UConn

Abstract: I will present a history of our brain imaging lab efforts over the past decade. We started focusing on fMRI studies that would corroborate the international literature on the neural underpinnings of early literacy and reading difficulties. Our pro-bono reading clinic for the diagnosis of developmental dyslexia (DD), lead to establishing a brain imaging bank of DD and the first brain imaging study of DD in Latin America, which showed a significant difference in resting-state network connectivity in DD children for the left occipitotemporal region. I will also present unpublished results from a longitudinal study of early reading and math, which suggests activation in posterior regions of the brain are associated with good reading and math skills. Next, I will present an unexpected turn taken by our lab. Owing to an interaction with an international development bank, we carried out a multisite, cross-sectional study of exposure to violence and brain function, in Brazilian and Honduran adolescents. Finally, I will present ongoing studies that aim to make inroads with early literacy practices, and which lead up to my move to UCONN.

Bio: Associate professor of Psychology at UCONN and affiliated researcher at Haskins labs, Dr. Buchweitz got his Ph.D. in Language and Linguistics from the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Brazil, in which he Investigated the brain bases of late bilinguals. He was a visiting scholar, and postdoc for three years at Carnegie Mellon University and was an Associate Professor of Psychology at the Pontifical Catholic University of RS (PUCRS, Brazil), and Senior Researcher at the Brain Institute of Rio Grande do Sul. His research interests involve using fMRI to investigate early literacy, developmental dyslexia, and the effects of the environment on cognitive development. He is the principal investigator for the GraphoGame Early Literacy APP, in Brazil. Buchweitz was nominated for Brazil's national education council in 2020, and the technical adviser for Brazil's national public school textbook program for daycare and preschool books. He is currently working with international development banks on early literacy EdTech solutions to assist teaching and evaluation.

Remote access Registration: https://bit.ly/34chDI6

*Please note: You *must* register in advance via Zoom*
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