

# Attentional Blink deficits shown in Dyslexia depend on task demands.

Judy Buchholz <sup>a,\*</sup> Anne Aimola Davies <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia*

<sup>b</sup>*The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia*  
*Macquarie Centre for Cognitive Science, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia*

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## Abstract

The attentional blink (AB) refers to a deficit in the ability to identify a second target following a first target when both appear randomly within a rapid sequence of distractor items. The AB of five adults with dyslexia (ADys) was compared with that of a group of normal adult readers. Two tasks were completed which differed in the conceptual category of the target items (a red digit or letter) relative to the distractor items (all black digits). In the digit condition, all ADys cases showed a longer AB. In the letter condition, all participants showed improvement in accuracy compared to the digit condition, but three ADys cases continued to have longer AB compared to the control group. The results suggest that a) AB performance depends on task requirements, and b) the attentional system is compromised in dyslexia. However, examination of individual case performance suggests that prolonged attentional dwell time is not a core deficit. The results also illustrates the limitations of group comparisons in small sample studies.

*Key words:* visual, attention

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\* Corresponding author. Present Address: School of Psychology, Building 39, ANU, Canberra, ACT. 0200. Australia. Tel: +61 2 6125 5545

*Email address:* Judy.Buchholz@anu.edu.au (Judy Buchholz).