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DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE

TITLE OF THESIS: DEVELOPING AND VALIDATING A COMBINED ATTENTION SYSTEMS TEST

TIME/DATE: 9:30 am, Tuesday, August 14, 2018

PLACE: Room 3107, The Mona Campbell Building, 1459 LeMarchant Street

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Dr. Darlene Brodeur, Department of Psychology, Acadia University
(External Examiner)

Dr. Tracy Taylor-Helmick, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience,
Dalhousie University (Reader)

Dr. John Christie, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, Dalhousie
University (Reader)

Dr. Shannon Johnson, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience,
Dalhousie University (Co-Supervisor)

Dr. Raymond Klein, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience,
Dalhousie University (Co - Supervisor)

DEPARTMENTAL REPRESENTATIVE: Dr. Sean MacKinnon Department of
Psychology and Neuroscience, Dalhousie
University

CHAIR: Dr. William Barker, PhD Defence Panel,
Faculty of Graduate Studies

ABSTRACT

Modern research on the phenomena of attention has motivated an increasingly nuanced view of its subsystems and their relations. However, popular tools for the measurement thereof are limited in their design in ways that hinder ongoing exploration of both typical and atypical operation of attention. This work describes a new tool that seeks to remediate these deficiencies, the Combined Attention Systems Test (CAST), and details initial efforts to validate its use, including deployment to study the operation of attention in populations of young adults and children. We observe reliable and stable measurement of a variety of phenomena of attention, some expected from prior literature and some newly discovered as a function of the CAST's improved design over existing tools. While we remark on areas of further potential improvement, this work argues strongly for the use of the CAST over previously popular tools.