



**Title:** Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs) are Plural: Not All Language-Based SLDs are the Same

**Audience:** SLPs, School Psychologists, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Interventionist Specialists, Clinical Psychologists, Neuropsychologists, Principals, and District Administrators

**Instructional Level:** Beginning to Intermediate

**Course Description:** Part 1 of this webinar will be the story of how 25 years of programmatic research led to the conclusion that there are three language-based specific learning disabilities (SLDs) that can be defined on the basis of *Learning Profiles* (achievement in multileveled language by ear, by mouth, by eye, and by hand) and *Phenotype Profiles* (clinical measures of working memory components supporting language learning and use). The three SLDs are **Dysgraphia**, **Dyslexia**, and **OWL LD** (oral and written language learning disability) which differ in the patterns of affected language skills and working memory components associated with genetic variables. Participants will engage in a [Part 1 Reflection Activity](#) about the implications of multiple SLDs for policy that qualifies students for special education services in an umbrella category of learning disability that does not acknowledge that SLDs are plural.

Part 2 of this webinar will be about the results of genetic and brain imaging studies that showed that **Dysgraphia**, **Dyslexia**, and **OWL LD** differ in their biological bases. Participants will engage in a [Part 2 Reflection Activity](#) about whether biologically based SLDs can be remediated with instructional interventions.

Part 3 of this webinar will share results of research about educational outcomes when instruction is not tailored to differential diagnosis of SLDs and of research showing that **Dysgraphia**, **Dyslexia**, and **OWL LD** all involve writing disabilities—just at different levels (units) of language. Participants will engage in a [Part 3 Reflection Activity](#) about whether it is misleading to present evidence-based instruction for SLDs as just being about reading—phonological decoding and phonological awareness—and why there needs to be more attention to specialized instruction tailored to diagnosis and the writing problems students with specific kinds of language-based SLDs experience.

Part 4 of this webinar will be an [Application to Practice Activity](#). Profiles of assessment results will be provided, and participants will be asked to decide if a diagnosis of **Dysgraphia**, **Dyslexia**, or **OWL LD** is appropriate. Case studies will be presented with a diagnosis and participants will be asked to propose recommendations for instruction.

# SPELL-Links™



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Key Benefits of Attending:

1. Be able to define **Dysgraphia**, **Dyslexia**, and **OWL LD** and receive a handout with relevant readings and resources for understanding differences among these three SLDs.
2. Understand why a multidisciplinary team is needed to diagnose these three SLDs and plan and implement specialized instruction tailored to diagnosis and the associated writing problems.
3. Learn why students with specific learning disabilities may fail to respond to literacy instruction unless the nature of their specific learning disability is appropriately diagnosed and instruction tailored to the diagnosis.

### Learning Objectives:

1. Explain why not all reading disabilities are the same (**Dyslexia**—word level real word/decoding and spelling/encoding impaired; **OWL LD**—reading comprehension impaired).
2. Distinguish the different reasons that **Dysgraphia**, **Dyslexia**, and **OWL LD** may have spelling disabilities requiring different kinds of specialized instruction embedded within a multi-level language framework.
3. Describe how **Dysgraphia**, **Dyslexia**, and **OWL LD** can interfere with math learning but in different aspects of math learning.

