

Narrator (00:00)

Welcome to the CLD Research Briefs podcast, where we highlight impactful research in the field of learning disabilities. Today, we're joined by Dr. Lindsay Diamond, Assistant Professor in the Department of Educator Preparation, and Dr. Abbie Olszewski, Associate Professor in Literacy Studies, both from the University of Nevada, Reno.

Doctors Diamond and Olszewski are co-authors of the 2024 Must Read Article Award winner, published in *Intervention in School and Clinic*. This is titled, *Disgraphia and Dyslexia Indicators Analyzing Children's Writing*. This practical and timely work offers concrete strategies to help teachers identify early signs of dyslexia before students fall behind.

We began by asking doctors Diamond and Olszewski to share a brief overview of their study and what drew them to this important work. We asked why they were interested in the topic and they discussed the value of speech pathologists and teachers working together to support students, particularly those with dyslexia, which is a language based disorder.

Dr. Abbie Olszewski (01:18)

Well I have been interested in dyslexia for over a decade because it's a language based learning disorder. And we recently had a student who was also interested in learning more about dyslexia and how

speech language pathologists and teachers can work together because by training, I'm a speech language pathologist. And so we were really interested in trying to figure out ways that we could identify signs of dyslexia and dysgraphia in children's writing because the writing aspect is often overlooked. We wanted to look at children's writing because we really wanted to improve early identification.

That was a good motivation to really put all of our energy into developing the DDBIC, which is the dysgraphia and dyslexia indicators in children's writing.

Dr. Lindsay Diamond (02:10)

From our point of view, having an interdisciplinary approach to the work that we're doing, it's just natural as an ECSE and an SLP for us to come together and really try to improve the outcomes for the children that we work with.

Narrator (02:24)

Their collaboration, spanning Early Childhood Special Education, or ECSE, along with literacy and speech-language pathology, aimed to design a tool that any teacher, speech-language pathologist, or SLP, or school professional could use in the classroom. We asked them about their most important findings and what educators should take away from their research.

Dr. Abbie Olszewski (02:49)

So in our research before we created the DDBIC, what we found was that there was a lack of preparation in both speech language pathology and educator preparation programs. And so before we wanted to kind of put this out into the world with practitioners,

we wanted to see if it would be possible to train graduate students. We did an asynchronous training module for graduate students in speech language pathology. So what we did was we taught them about dyslexia and dysgraphia, and then we taught them about the different behaviors that could be observed in children's writing. And then we taught them how to look at those and identify them.

Dr. Lindsay Diamond (03:30)

So then Dr. O and I decided we need to expand this, right? So we need to take the DDBIC and figure out does this actually work in classrooms on a larger scale? And this was the beginning of our validation study, which is super exciting.

Dr. Abbie Olszewski (03:44)

We know teachers are very busy, right? And this tool is easy to implement because you can use authentic text. You know, children's writing samples that are already happening in the classroom to look at these behaviors in this validation study.

Narrator (04:00)

Their findings reveal that early signs of dyslexia and dysgraphia are often visible, but often missed. The DDBIC offers a user-friendly structure to change that and makes it easy for teachers to implement in their classrooms without carving additional time out in their already busy school days. Next, we asked the researchers what this all means for teachers, related service providers, and policymakers.

Doctors Diamond and Olszewski discussed that their tool, the dysgraphia and dyslexia behavioral indicator checklist, or DDBIC, can easily be implemented in the classroom because it's something teachers are already doing in their classrooms. Their number one goal as researchers is that they want to target and work on detecting dyslexia early, even as early as kindergarten.

Dr. Lindsay Diamond (04:59)

DDBIC can be easily implemented into a classroom. It's not strenuous activity. It's something that you're doing already in your work. So it is really easy to implement in classroom and to be used to identify students early. This is our biggest, like no one goal, right? Is that we really want, we want to catch these kids before it gets so far down the pipeline that they are being identified as having more significant need.

Narrator (05:26)

The DDBIC reinforces the power of equipping educators with clear tools to support early intervention. Before wrapping up, we asked if there was anything else they wanted listeners to take away from this podcast and why they believe in being part of the CLD community.

Dr. Lindsay Diamond (05:46)

this article in mind, our whole purpose of targeting intervention in school and clinic through CLD was really that this can get in the hands of practitioners, right? It's a research to practice journal that really can provide the avenue, right? It's the vehicle to get our work out there to the people who are actually gonna use it and use it with their students that they're training in their programs and use it in their schools that they're working in.

So it was a really specific target for us that we knew we wanted to write for ISC. was a no-brainer for us. I would encourage those who are out there, if you're using our tool, you're involved with CLD.

Make sure you read ISC and then also attend the conference, be a part of the community because we are all here to collaborate and work together for really to better the outcomes of the children that we work with. That really is the ultimate goal of what we do. We're training individuals to be in classrooms and schools and professional organizations to really make the impact with families and kids.

Narrator (06:47)

Whether you're a classroom teacher, a researcher, or a graduate student, CLD provides a welcoming professional home to learn, lead, and connect to high quality practical research, such as what Drs. Diamond and Olszewski are working on in this project. Thank you to Dr. Lindsey Diamond and Dr. Abbie Olszewski for joining us today. To read their award-winning article or to download the DDBIC,

Disgraphia and Dyslexia Behavioral Indicator Checklist, please visit Intervention in School and Clinic or the CLD website. There is also an infographic that goes along with this podcast that is available to view on the CLD website. Thanks so much for listening to the CLD Research Briefs podcast and we'll see you next time.