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## Reading Diagnosis: What Is It?

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## Editorial Comment

### READING DIAGNOSIS: WHAT IS IT?

Is diagnosis, as applied in reading, the function of the teacher or is it the responsibility of the consulting psychologist who has specialized in the study of reading maladjustment?

The diagnosis or interpretation of reading disability can be made at any one of four levels. The first and lowest is merely *identification* of the nature of the problem. For example, a child having difficulty in the classroom may be diagnosed as a non-reader. The second level makes use of tests and results in *classification*. A disabled reader, for example, in the fifth grade scoring at the second grade level on a reading test is diagnosed as a secondary reading problem because he is severely penalized academically, socially and emotionally as a result of his deficiency. The third level of diagnosis requires the *determination of reading needs*. Informal inventories, observations, objective measures and academic history may suggest that an individual needs, for example, to acquire more adequate skill in reading for main ideas and for the purpose of learning what to accept and what to reject. The fourth level involves *determination of causal factors* which may be found by a team of specialists in such disciplines as physiology, psychology, sociology and medicine. At this level a clinical study is made of the individual in his environment.

The experienced teacher can diagnose reading disabilities at levels one, two and three and can serve as a member of a team of specialists to function at level four. The responsibility of diagnosis and treatment of causal factors, however, is the legal function of the certified consulting psychologist or psychiatrist. The teacher has neither the training, facilities nor the legal right to function at this level on her own.

Homer L. J. Carter  
Editor