

THE DOMAN-DELACATO THEORY
OF NEUROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION
AS IT RELATES TO READING

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Our complex society places ever greater demands on its citizens in terms of the written word, and reading disability is a severe handicap. Despite various approaches utilized in the classroom, as well as extensive remedial programs in the schools, children continue to fail to achieve competency in this essential skill.

Carl H. Delacato and Glenn and Robert Doman, at The Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential in Philadelphia, offer a controversial theory, and subsequent method of treatment, for the correction of reading problems in intellectually capable children.

The basis for their approach is the theory of neurological organization and the application of neurological patterning as a treatment for intellectually capable children who cannot read. The author has carried out a study of this theory and its application to children with reading problems in an objective attempt to clarify its value as an effective remedy. The Domans and Delacato have been using patterning techniques for non-readers since The Institutes for the Achievement of Human Potential opened in 1955.

The procedures used at the Institutes have received considerable acclaim from the lay public, but many professionals in the fields of education and medicine have not been

enthusiastic. A repeated criticism has been that the Doman-Delacato theory and treatment methods have not been substantiated. As the result of research the author of this paper concurs with this criticism. It would appear from the literature that the foundation for the Doman-Delacato theory and treatment methods rests on extremely narrow and selective scientific investigation. The fact that the Institutes appear reluctant to permit an outside agency to test the efficacy of their treatment methods has produced, what many believe to be, very justifiable concern in professional organizations.

The author initially poses the question: Can all children who possess the accepted intellectual capacity learn to read competently following treatment by the Doman-Delacato method of neurological patterning? Following this study of the available literature on the subject, the author of this paper believes that the answer to this question must be in the negative.