

# The Importance of People

Column Editor: Harold Benjamin  
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*The author of the following column describes two universes between which students have to be torn to be adjusted. The editor can testify that Earl Reynolds himself has emerged from this ordeal with suave insight and good nature.*

Harold Benjamin

## How Green the Blue?

EVERY COLLEGE STUDENT today is a schizophrenic, except of course the maladjusted.

The normal college student has developed two personalities for the two worlds in which he lives. First there is the real world, the Green World, built on natural emotions and drives, the world of sleeping and eating, of playing and dating, of speaking and seeing, of sensing the realities of life and adjusting to those realities. Then there is the other world, the Blue World that lies behind heavy doors, a world of symbols and rituals, a world of book-lined walls and dusty aisles, a world of straight-backed chairs, a world ruled by an omnipotent seer who directs its progress in space and time. These two worlds seldom meet. The normal schizophrenic ejects the Blue World from his emotional world, nor will he allow the Green World of emotion to be contaminated in the dark corridors of that other world. In order that the individual may not become frustrated by a mixing of these two worlds, the wise rulers of the Blue World place the student on a time-study program—a time to live in each world. The well-adjusted schizophrenic survives. There are some, however, who cannot live two lives and they find that they must withdraw either into the life of the living and be excluded from entry into the Blue World or they must withdraw

into the Blue World only to be ostracized by the society of the Green World.

## The Color-Mixing Remedy

A not-so-new treatment recommends itself as a cure. Even so, a question remains in the minds of some as to whether or not a cure is desirable. Perhaps it would be worth an investigation—perhaps tomorrow, or the next day, or the day after.

But "the day after" eventually comes!

A professor in chemistry decided to try out this instructional aid on his class of college sophomores. "Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "chemistry, like most specialized subjects, must be logically developed. It is a 'tower' subject. We lay a foundation—the principles of chemistry. Then we build an artifice on this foundation until we have a great storehouse of information."

The students looked at one another and mechanically shook their heads in approving fashion. This was the well established ritual prior to readings in the new gospels.

"I now ask you," the professor continued, "is the information you are storing useful information? Is it functional? Is it making a difference in your *everyday* life?"

"Everyday life? What is he saying?"

"Sacriligious!"

"Blasphemy!"

"For this week's assignment I want

you to observe some phenomenon, event, or object from everyday life and find its relation, if any, to the topics we will discuss this week. You may present your work for approval in any form you choose. Are there any questions?"

Stone-faced mutes stared.

"Best to humor him, I'd say."

"He's been teaching too long."

"He'll probably forget all about it by the end of the week and everything will be normal again."

"Very well then, if there are no questions we will begin the lecture for today." The professor began to write on the board.

The students breathed a sigh of relief as the routine of the lecture brought normality back.

### What Relation to Chemistry?

That week was a week to be long remembered by all who lived it. It was a shock to live in two worlds at the same time.

From the moment the students peeked out into the Green World from the Blue World a change took place. At first the students questioned each other eagerly, wondering what the instructor wanted and where he wanted them to get it. Then they began to look around. Trees, what relation to chemistry? Breakfast, what relation to chemistry? Automobiles, what relation to chemistry?

Things became so bad that by the end of the week one dared not ask the time of day for fear the reply would be, "What relation does it have to chemistry?"

The day of atonement came and trembling young men and young women filed into the inner sanctum bearing a bit of chemical knowledge clothed in the garb of the living world. Each in turn laid his or her offering

on the altar and retired meekly to the safety of the group.

The lecture that day was a review of the week's work, it was a lecture-discussion in the practical applications and interrelatedness of the topics previously discussed. The products of the students were discussed and displayed. Each student was anxious to see what others had done. Each student left the class that day with a strange feeling. Something new had taken place. What was it? Learning? Surely this was not learning!

Something indeed *had* happened. The next week the professor gave the same assignment. The students noticed that the lectures, although they followed the "tower" pattern, were related to the Green World; the subject matter seemed to take on new meaning—real meaning; and *they* were participating in this experience, they were making some abstract concept a living reality—they were creating!

Each student rather enjoyed his own project. Some chose different topics each week, some chose to give a progress report each week and worked on one large project over a period of time, some worked individually, and some with common interests worked in groups.

To an elementary or secondary school teacher, it may seem merely that intelligent instruction had at last reached the college level. To the students, a new composite world had suddenly been revealed.

A survey of the projects would show drawings of chemical apparatus, plant designs, production flow-sheets, characterizations of chemical phenomenon, "chempos" as chemical poems in traditional and modern forms came to be known, essays, fictional accounts, scale models, experiments on commercial products; the resourcefulness of an in-

quiring and imaginative student far exceeded any list of items. Some chose to combine projects in this class with their work in biology or English. But all their activities had in common the application or demonstration of a chemical phenomenon. The projects were not time-consuming but they served to do what "talk" could never do. They brought a closer approach to "one world" for the individual.

And so the lectures rolled on as the waters of a river flow toward their goal

in ever-increasing volume and depth and power. Resourceful projects along the way had caused the waters to irrigate the adjacent lands, to give life to these lands, to make them productive, and to make them yield fruit where fruit had never grown.

The two worlds were fusing, and the students were happily becoming abnormal in their lack of schizophrenia. —*Earl A. Reynolds*, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee.

## The Listening Post

Column Editor: C. Glen Hass  
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### Steel—The Crisis in American Education

DOUBLE SHIFTS, triple shifts, quadruple shifts; classes in basements, classes in rented stores, classes next to the boiler room—these are the conditions under which millions of American children are attending school this year.

For the past two decades, few new schools were built, as a result of the depression in the 1930's and the shortage and high cost of materials and labor during World War II and the years immediately following. Compounded with the problem of school facilities, inadequate for even the steady, but predictable, increase in school population over these years, is the fact that the unprecedented wartime and post-war baby-crops are just now beginning to come of school age. In 1951-1952, 800,000 more children began school than in the previous year. Next year, twice that number—1.6 million—will be added to the school rolls. By 1960, 7 million more pupils will be attending school than were in school at the beginning of the decade.

### Construction Lags Far Behind Need

In order to reduce the backlog and make normal replacements accumulated over twenty years' time, 54,000 new classrooms are needed annually until the end of the 1950's. Next year alone, 53,000 units should be built to house the increase in enrollments. However, the construction rate prior to mid-1951 was running at about 40,000 units a year—less than one-half of the number required.

In the months following the outbreak of the Korean conflict, it became increasingly evident that the military and civilian demand for steel and certain other metals was far in excess of the available supply. Therefore, in July of 1951, the Controlled Materials Plan, administered by the Defense Production Administration and the National Production Authority, became effective to assure a balanced distribution of these materials as between military and civilian requirements and as between

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