

PSYCHOLOGY

Support Pause For Tea

► THE WELL-KNOWN English custom of pausing in the day's work for a "spot of tea" served with pleasant conversation seems to be supported by research reported to the Eastern Psychological Association meeting in New York, provided follow-up studies confirm the findings.

Preliminary studies indicate that such a pause with a cup of tea will "pep up" those whose interest and work level are flagging and, at the same time, will calm down those who are too tense or jittery. The preliminary findings were reported by Dr. Harold Schlosberg of Brown University in his presidential address.

Housewives were selected for his experiments, and only those were included who were used to drinking at least one cup of tea a day. They were put through a long and strenuous program of mental and physiological tests with a pause midway for tea, rest and conversation.

Scores were compared with those of a similar group who went through the same program except that they had no tea in their rest pause. Skin conductance was measured to show up tenseness and to indicate any added effort to counteract fatigue. Before and after tests showed an improvement for the tea drinkers and none for those who did not drink.

The effect was too immediate to be due to the caffeine in the tea which takes longer to be assimilated and take effect.

The skin conductance invariably shot up as the woman subject started a new task or test, then fell gradually until that job was finished. The general level of conductance was related to the difficulty of the task.

This was interpreted by Dr. Schlosberg to mean that the conductance measures served as an indication of energy mobilization or level of attention. Each time a woman started a new job she alerted herself to give more of herself to the work. Then as she got used to it she gradually relaxed.

This interpretation was supported by the fact that the conductance level tended to be lower on each successive day as the subjects became familiar with the routine. The scores thus did not support the theory that with increasing fatigue the individual exerts more effort to keep work level even.

Apparently, Dr. Schlosberg concluded, there is an optimum level of activation, or tenseness, that is appropriate for the particular task at hand. Stopping for a cup of tea seems from these preliminary studies to help you reach this optimum. It peeps you up if you are fagged out, but relaxes you if you are too keyed up to do your best work.

Science News Letter, April 24, 1954

GEOGRAPHY

Hemispheric Viewpoints

► FROM THE space traveler's point of view there is no human being anywhere on earth who does not live in a hemisphere that includes all of the United States.

This global view of the world we live in was presented to the Association of American Geographers meeting in Philadelphia by Dr. S. Whittemore Boggs, special adviser on geography to the U. S. Department of State.

We have become accustomed to thinking in terms of one Eastern Hemisphere and one Western Hemisphere divided by imaginary lines that are actually meaningless to geographers, Dr. Boggs said. He pointed out, however, that anyone looking at the earth from a space ship 10,000,000 miles away in any direction could see an infinite number of hemispheres, according to the particular location in space of his ship.

"The people of every 'culture world' are therefore geographically nearer to the United States than most of us realize—none so remote that they do not live in what we might call 'an American hemisphere.'" The American hemispheres include the one centered at Moscow.

"Flat-map thinking" about global relations was deplored by Dr. Boggs as "treacherously deceptive, and politically and socially dangerous."

Our children have easily become accustomed to models of atoms, with nuclei comprising protons and neutrons and with electrons moving in planetary orbits, Dr. Boggs pointed out.

"When children begin early to see and think in world terms, realistically related to the roundness of the earth," he said, "the solution of world problems will become tractable."

Dr. Boggs is chairman of the National Research Council's committee on construction and use of precise globes and spherical maps. This committee is studying how to make globes more accurate and uniform, how to use transparent plastic materials as overlays to show special information about various regions, and how to project global distributions onto a dome like a planetarium.

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The average yearly *temperature* difference between the equator and the North Pole is about 90 degrees Fahrenheit, recent studies have shown.

During the 12-month period ending June, 1953, the police departments of the nation dealt with more than 1,000,000 children as *delinquents*.



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